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ON THE GENIUS AND WRITINGS OF
Sir Walter Scott.

IN the poetical, as in the political world, victor after victor arises, tearing the circlet of supremacy from the brow of his predecessor, and, for a time, winning golden opinions upon every hand. The million, indeed, are ever ready to transfer their homage to the latest hero, whether in the field of Mars or the Muses; and, not content with the elevation of their immediate idol, endeavour, by a strange perversion, either to forget his fallen rival, or remember him only with contempt. It is not enough that Pericles is advanced—Cymon must submit to banishment. This, perhaps, is little more than an amplification of the common-place remark, that human opinion is mutable, and popularity held by a fragile tenure; but it may not be equally trite to observe, that neither in the case of the warrior, or the bard, have we candour or generosity enough to reflect how far the object of our present admiration has been spirited to the goal by the very being he supersedes—how far that spirit of excitement, springing from the contemplation of another's excellence—that stimulus, arising from the inherent jealousy of our nature, which awakens with a vivacity proportioned to the existing

powers of the rival object—may have tended to call into action energies, of which even the possessor had scarcely a previous consciousness—energies, that without such potential invocation, might, indeed, have been partially indicated, but never fully displayed. Dr. Johnson informs us, that in his day, few persons were disposed to allow Addison the name of a critic; yet, to Addison, perhaps, is to be ascribed the foundation of the first pure school of English criticism; and, undoubtedly, not one of the many, who afterwards affected to condemn or despise the principles by which he decided, could, with justice, boast himself wholly unindebted to that great writer; on the contrary, it is asserted that “the enemies of Addison’s fame would never have been enabled to point out his defects, but for the light he himself had afforded them,” and I think we may add, the glow of excitement, to which calm, unbiassed reflection must ever ascribe so much, and the world has long imputed so little.

I have been naturally led into this train of ideas, at the commencement of an Essay on the Writings of Scott, from a consideration of the neglect into which the genius, or, as the Edinburgh Reviewers express themselves, *the demon* of Byron, has so decidedly and suddenly thrown them; a neglect, rather to be regretted than regarded with surprise, but which, at the period when intense curiosity drew crowds to the romantic wilds of Caledonia, merely to survey the scenery of the *Lady of the Lake*, few perhaps would have ventured to predict. The first and predominant cause of this heavy declension in public estimation, is, as I have already acknowledged, to be traced to the bursting forth of those gigantic powers so splendidly developed in “*Harold*,” and the “*Giaour*,” yet, however justly the palm of precedency was thus awarded, there is surely little to applaud or defend in the prevailing affectation of critical acumen, by which the beautiful, though faulty, romances of the northern minstrel, are degraded to the level of common-place extravagancies, because incapable of sustaining a comparison with the overpowering majesty and grandeur of a Byron. Let it be remembered, that at a time when the puerility of pastoral composition was yet at its height, when velvet meadows and purling streams, and *Damons and Phillidas*, recurred with disgusting frequency, Sir Walter Scott, by the mere force of unassisted genius, without the stimulus of rivalry, without one existing object of emulation, established a bold, original, and brilliant school of poetry, in which the agency of human passions and feelings, called into action by events the most

spirit-stirring, was at once rendered natural and dignified ; in which the lights and shades of character were nicely discriminated ; and scenery of the sublimest order pourtrayed with the vigour and boldness of a Claude. His achievements in this new field were hailed with rapture and surprise ; all competition was crushed, and criticism disarmed ; but, in process of time, a natural consequence became apparent, and the universal admiration of Scotland's master-spirit, everywhere tended to an expansion of soul, and the kindling of its nobler energies ; to awaken more splendid aspirations, and induce more vigorous efforts ; a spirit of emulation, in short, became speedily generated ; which, on successive minds, operated like inspiration, or a spell, and however startled many may be at such an application of my former remarks, I do not hesitate in asserting so much to be justly attributable to excitement, that had Sir Walter Scott never existed, Childe Harold and its successors had never appeared.

If the genius of Sir Walter is not of the most elevated class, it approximates to it sufficiently to demand our veneration in no ordinary degree ; and, indeed, in the peculiar field which he has chosen, no antagonist has reared a successful standard. Hosts of imitators, (among whom may be ranked some of the brightest names of the day,) have rushed within his circle, but if many evinced the judgment to avoid his errors, not one possessed the ability to emulate his beauties. The world of chivalry is his own, and of the various adventurers who have ;

".....Essay'd to break a lance
In the fair fields of old Romance,"

none have quitted the lists with equal honour. To enter into a distinct, or even partial review of his several productions, would far exceed the limits of my communication ; I shall restrict myself to a few comments on his peculiar excellencies and faults, citing, as I proceed, such examples of either, as may appear most decided and obvious.

His amazing powers of description have been long, and indeed invariably acknowledged ; yet critics are not wanting, who assert that his scenery merely sparkles to the eye of the imagination, without reference to the purer and gentler feelings, awakened in the bosom by a contemplation of nature's loveliness ; that his landscapes have brilliance and fidelity, but betray nothing of that poetry of the heart, resulting from a delicate association of ideas,

and emotions with external and visible objects ; that, in short, he busies the eye, but leaves the mind at rest ; incapable, from all that is presented to the first, of suggesting its consequent operations upon the latter ; or having no depth of sympathy with those finer spirits, whose susceptibility is alive to the gentlest and minutest impressions, who " hear a voice in all the winds," and to whom the rose " darts an arrowy odour thro' the brain." His communion with nature, indeed, is not of that strange intensity which sets at nought all powers of expression, and

" lives and dies unheard,
With a most voiceless thought—sheathing it as a sword ;"

he does not, like the author of the above couplet, struggle with a conflicting crowd of undefined feelings, which it is impossible to " wreak upon expression ;" but, if [far from tempestuous in its workings, let not the mind of him, who could produce such lines as the following, be said to slumber in inertness.

" When musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain—
There is a pleasure in this pain ;
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart imprest,
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils ;
But in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content,
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone St. Mary's silent Lake ;
Thou know'st it well—nor fen nor sedge
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge,
Abrupt and sheer the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink ;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view,
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,

Save where of land yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine.
Yet, e'en this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour ;
Nor thicket, copse, nor dell ye spy,
Where living thing conceal'd might lie ;
Nor point retiring hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman, lone may dwell ;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess :
You see that all is loneliness ;
And silence aids, tho' the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills.
In summer-tide so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep.
Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near ;
For, tho' in feudal strife a foe
Hath laid our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil ;
And, dying, bids his bones be laid
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.
If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell ;
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton long'd to spend his age.
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day,
On Bournhope's lovely top decay,
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tow'r,
And think on Yarrow's faded flow'r ;
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rushing of his wings,
As up his force the tempest brings ;
'Twere sweet 'ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the wizard's grave ;
That wizard-priest, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust,

On which no sun-beam ever shines,
So superstition's creed divines ;
Thence view the lake with sullen roar
Heave her broad billows to the shore,
And mark the wild-swans mount the gale,
Spread wide thro' mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave.
Then, when against the driving hail,
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp and trim my fire ;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway ;
And in the bittern's distant shriek
I heard unearthly voices speak ;
And thought the wizard-priest was come
To claim again his ancient home,
And bade my busy fancy range
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I clear'd,
And smil'd to think that I had fear'd !

The fate of the unfortunate Constance in "Marmion" is described with masterly vigour ; and perhaps, in the whole range of descriptive poetry, there is nothing more appropriately beautiful, or awfully impressive, than the passage I am about to quote. Who does not hear the agonized shrieks of the immured victims as their three judges quit the trial-vault ? or imagine the deep solemn knell that follows, striking at once upon the ear and the heart ?—

A hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day ;
But ere they reach'd the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan ;
With speed their upward way they take,
Such speed as age and fear can make.
And cross themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying—tottering on !

E'en in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll,
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight-wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung ;
To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd—
His beads the wakeful hermit told ;
The Bamborough peasant rais'd his head—
Yet slept ere half a pray'r he said.
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprang up on Cheviot-fell,
Spread his broad nostrils to the wind,
Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

Of poetry, which addresses the heart and imagination at once, mingling with the wildness of romance the tenderness of nature and reality, the following is an exquisite instance. It occurs in the "Lord of the Isles" (his last poetical production) where Bruce, Ronald, and the unfortunate Page, Allen, find shelter in the Pirates' Cavern, and slumber and watch alternately. The different train of thought in which each indulges during his hours of vigil, is naturally and beautifully told; the high-minded monarch dwelling upon the fate of his kingdom, and the probable struggles to be endured ere he regains it; the Lord of the Isles absorbed in recollections of his gentle mistress; and lastly, the simple Page—but let the poet tell the rest.

To Allen's eyes was harder task
The weary watch their safeties ask—
He trimm'd the fire, and gave to shine
With bickering light the splinter'd pine ;
Then gazed awhile, where silent laid,
His hosts were shrouded by the plaid ;
But little fear wak'd in his mind
For he was bred of martial kind,
And if to manhood he arrive,
May match the boldest knight alive.

Then thought he of his mother's tow'r,
His little sister's greenwood bow'r,
And how the Easter gambols pass,
And of Don Joseph's lengthen'd mass.
But still before his weary eye
In rays prolong'd the blazes die.
Again he rous'd him—on the lake
Look'd forth, where now the twilight flake
Of pale cold dawn began to wake,
On Coolin's cliffs the mist lay furl'd,
The morning breeze the lake had curl'd,
The short dark waves heav'd to the land,
With ceaseless plash kiss'd cliff and sand ;
It was a slumb'rons sound—he turn'd
To tales at which his youth had burn'd,
Of Pilgrim's path by dæmon crost,
Of sprightly elf or yelling ghost,
Of the wild witch's baneful cot,
And mermaid's alabaster grot,
Who bathes her limbs in sunless well,
Deep in Straithard's enchanted cell ;—
Thither in fancy wrapt he flies,
And on his sight the vaults arise ;
That hut's dark walls he sees no more,
His foot is on the marble floor,
And o'er his head the dazzling spars
Gleam like a firmament of stars ;
Hark ! hears he not the sea-nymph speak
Her anger in that thrilling shriek ?
No—all too late with Allen's dream
Mingles the captive's warning scream,
As from the ground he strives to start,
A ruffian's dagger finds his heart—
Upwards he casts his dizzy eyes,
Murmurs his master's name—and dies !”

The “Lay of the last Minstrel” is, in my opinion, his most faulty production ; the plea that we are to imagine the poem sung by an itinerant bard, scarcely excusing its uncouth measure and diction. The characters want dignity, and the incidents connection ; but

that pervading fire, without which, the nicest arrangement of parts, and the utmost polish of style, are lifeless and unavailing, seldom remains languid throughout any work of Sir Walter Scott, and among the numerous passages of diversified style and excellence in the Lay, that wherein the border-warrior opens the wizard's grave, may claim peculiar regard. It is scarcely possible to conceive a situation in which the horrors of superstition could fall upon the mind more forcibly, or to describe with greater vigour the operation of those horrors on the beings imagined to sustain them.

“ Lo ! warrior, now, the cross of red
 Points to the grave of the mighty dead,
 Within it burns a wond’rous light,
 To chase the spirits that love the night ;
 That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
 Until the eternal doom shall be.”
 Slow mov’d the monk to the broad flag-stone
 Which the bloody cross was traced upon,
 He pointed to a secret nook,
 An iron bar the warrior took ;
 And the monk made a sign with his wither’d hand,
 The grave’s huge portals to expand !—

.....

And when the priest his death-pray’r had pray’d,
 Thus unto Deloraine he said—
 “ Now speed thee what thou hast to do,
 Or, warrior, we may dearly rue,
For those thou mayst not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone !”
 Then Deloraine in terror took
 From the cold hand the mighty book,
 With iron clasp’d, and with iron bound—
 He thought as he took it the dead man frown’d,
 But the glare of the fierce sepulchral light
 Perchance had dazzled the warrior’s sight !
 When the huge stone sunk o’er the tomb,
 The night return’d in double gloom,
 For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few,
 And as the knight and the priest withdrew,

With wav'ring steps and dizzy brain,
 They hardly might the postern gain.
 'Tis said, as thro' the aisles they past,
 They heard strange noises on the blast,
 And thro' the cloister galleries small,
 Which, at mid-height, thread the chancel tall,
 Loud sobs and laughter louder ran,
 And voices unlike the voice of man!"—

Of the lyrics scattered so profusely through his works, many bear the marks of haste and indifference, but some have an enchanting wildness and beauty. The *Coronach* in the *Lady of the Lake* is in his best style :

" He is gone on the mountain—
 He is lost to the forest—
 Like a summer-dried fountain
 When our need was the sorest.
 The fount re-appearing,
 From the rain-drop shall borrow,
 But to us comes no cheering,
 To Duncan no morrow !—

The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weaver
 Wails manhood in glory !
 The Autumn-winds rushing
 Waft the leaves that are searest,
 But our flow'r was in flushing
 When blighting was nearest !—

Fleet foot on the corrie,
 Sage counsel in cumber,
 Red hand in the foray,
 How sound is thy slumber !
 Like the dew on the mountain,
 Like the foam on the river—
 Like the bubble on the fountain—
 Thou art gone, and for ever !"

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the characters of Scott are rigorously drawn and consistently preserved; that his description of scenery and events is characterized by a sublimity seldom excelled—and his pictures of ancient manners and habits by invariable fidelity and spirit. Few maxims of moral or domestic wisdom occur in his pages; but to this objection it may be replied, that with such the very nature of romance is at variance; the necessary extravagance of incident determining the sentiments and opinions of the actors, which therefore can seldom be applicable to the purposes of common life. His general style exhibits a most reprehensible carelessness; and to this charge, the rhyme, measure, and diction, of his every work is undeniably liable. But perhaps his greatest fault consists in amplification. He quits a subject with reluctance, and seldom till its grandeur is weakened by unnecessary extension; as in "Marmion," where the amazing pictures of the Battle of Flodden, and the death of the guilty but gallant hero, are succeeded by several stanzas of common-place, relating what every reader's imagination might well enough supply:—the marriage of De Wilton and Clare, and how

"Bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
And Catherine's hand the stocking threw."

Byron pours his strength like a headlong torrent, that the gorge of some unfathomable cavern swallows abruptly; imagination shudders on the brink, and heightens the effect of all that is visible by picturing a thousand horrors in the dark whirlpools and gulphs beneath. Scott, too, has the cataract's impetuosity, but it breaks upon too continuous a surface, and branching off in inconsiderable channels, loses the grandeur of its original course; we listen with indifference to its subsiding murmurs, and in the languor of feeling they excite, almost forget the sublimity of our former impressions.—Such, however, is the magic of genius, that even the most palpable errors of judgment cannot wholly debar its claim to our admiration; and with all that deteriorates from their value, with all that can irritate the critic and offend the common reader, the poems of Sir Walter Scott must ever be regarded as effusions of a powerful mind and a rich imagination; as compositions of originality, beauty, and vigour, which, if the achievements of others no longer permit us to regard with surprise, will at least, never fail to be perused with delight.

Walworth, Nov. 1821.

J. G. G.

Looking-Glasses.

A DISSERTATION on looking-glasses! How extremely ridiculous! Pardon us, reader; a more serious or important subject can scarcely be imagined; for, on inquiry, we shall find, that the consenting opinion of all time, from the infancy of the world to its manhood in the sixteenth, its old age in the seventeenth, and its dotage in the nineteenth century, is decidedly in favour of the mirror, through all its varieties, from nature's own looking-glass, the waveless lake, the clear stream, or the placid brook, to the whole length reflector of a fashionable boudoir, and the pocket speculum of a modern exquisite.

One evening, as Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Boswell, were sipping their coffee, at the Grecian, Boswell, who felt particularly anxious to conciliate the great moralist, ejaculated, as he observed a smart fellow of that day, adjusting his perriwig by a finger-glass: "Ah! my dear doctor, can that man have a soul, who is more concerned about the adjustment of his curls, than the well-ordering of his wits? A looking-glass! What an insignificant and contemptible toy!"—"But surely very elegant—you forget our fair country-women. What would Mrs. Boswell say?" was Sir Joshua's good-humoured observation. Johnson paused for a moment, assumed his most magisterial air, and in a voice of thunder, enunciated the following sentence: "Sir, it is the quality of ignorance and presumption, to announce its opinions dogmatically, however vague, insufficient and foundationless their premises. Cleanliness is almost a virtue, and as that elegant combination of vitrified and mercurialized particles is used with a view to cleanliness, who shall dare to denounce the invention as absurd? Sir, let us hear no more of the insignificance of looking-glasses."

In all ages, the ladies have evinced a laudable anxiety to set off their good gifts to the best possible advantage; and in all her vagaries, the fickle goddess, Fashion, has at least been consistent in endeavouring to attain one grand object, the enthrallment of the fancy and the subjugation of the heart. Hence the great esteem in which mirrors, natural and artificial, have always been held by the fair sex—among the aboriginal inhabitants of Eden, the labours of

the toilet were soon completed : yet Eve had a spice of the coquet in her character—and as for Ovid's Pyrrha, she was chiefly remarkable for two things, her love for a new gown, and her love for her husband ; but which of these feelings predominated, the wise men of antiquity have not determined. The garden of Eden was doubtless a very delightful place, yet we question whether a modern fine lady would think so. The season at Almack's has just commenced :—let us suppose one of the lovely patronesses of that temple of Terpsichore, suddenly transported, on an assembly-night, to the verdant shades of paradise, surrounded with all the paraphernalia of dress, except,—dreadful omission!—a looking-glass. Imagine her confusion, horror, and embarrassment; she might lay on too much white paint or too little red; she might mismatch her ringlets, or her eyebrows, or arrange her teeth as irregularly as those of a Lapland witch; yet the lady, whose thirst for knowledge was so vehement that she chose the devil for her tutor, felt no disturbance under circumstances even still more perplexing. Eve had hardly ceased to be Adam's twelfth rib, when, as she stood blushing at her own beauty, it very naturally occurred to her, not that she wanted a pair of silk hose, or a Chinese screen,—no—but that a looking-glass was indispensable. What was to be done? There were no upholsterers in Eden, and a mirror must be found ; the difficulty, however, was soon surmounted ; but Eve shall speak for herself; her blank verse is extremely pretty :

" Not distant far from thence, a murmuring sound
Of waters issu'd from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain, then stood unmov'd,
Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n : I thither went,
With inexperience'd thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that seem'd to me another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd,*
Bending to look on me : I started back ;
It started back ; but pleas'd I soon return'd ;
Pleas'd it return'd as soon ; with answering looks
Of sympathy and love."

PARADISE LOST, BOOK IV.

Polyphemus, the one-eyed lover of Galatea, used to shave himself on the sea shore, making the ocean his dressing-glass, which, as his personal graces were on rather a large scale, answered the

* If Madam Eve, or her ingenious biographer, were in circumstances to answer the question, we should be tempted to ask, how "a murmuring sound" could spread itself "into a liquid plain," or stand "unmoved, pure as the expanse of Heaven."

purpose admirably well. Narcissus, poor fellow, had the misfortune to be so very handsome, that it was impossible for him to like any face but his own. To enjoy without molestation the interesting contemplation of his own charms, he retired to a certain grotto, where the crystalline waters of a fountain regaled him with a constant view of his sweet self; and there, notwithstanding the tender assiduities of Nymphs, Dryads, and Naiads, and though Miss Echo pined herself to a mere sound, out of pure love for him, after consuming his lungs in sighs, and wearing out his lips with kissing "the dear deceiver in the stream," he actually expired of a broken heart. It is common to laugh at Narcissus, but, excepting in his death, which was no joke, it would be no difficult matter to find him many worthy rivals. We do not meet gentlemen fondly lingering at the corner of the streets, with portable specula in their hands: but we do see them ogling their well blacked boots or well cut coats, and surveying their proper selves with conscious pride, and glances of infinite affection and goodwill. Vanity is the idol of women, we are told; what will they not sacrifice for display? They are more easily wrought on by the flatteries of two or three feet of silvered plate glass, than by the experience of a whole life; and if we grant these assertions to be founded in truth, what is proved? Are the lords of the creation, the bipeds in kerseymere, free from such faults? Those who have been at an Easter ball, or a city concert; who have been elbowed from the ample pavement of St. James's Street, by a Lilliputian cornet without a beard; or have had their limbs endangered by a titled Jarvis, are most competent to answer the question. If our fair dames hold frequent consultations with "the smiles and loves" at their looking-glasses, none but cynics or fools ought to feel offended, when it is remembered that the art of pleasing forms a most important part of every woman's duty. Men, too, may sacrifice to the graces with advantage. But while the softer sex can, with propriety, lay a turtle dove on their altar, "man, proud man," must present a more masculine offering, the first fruits of his industry, courage, fortitude and genius.

Glass mirrors are of a comparatively modern date; they were invented by the Venetians so late as the middle of the fifteenth century: but polished metallic plates had been in use for similar purposes, from a very early period. Hence, the triumphant beauties of the present day, should not pique themselves on their superior refinement, by indulging a belief, that the luxury of a

looking-glass was unknown to the matrons of ancient Rome, or the earthly goddesses of the age of chivalry. The first glimpse which Sextus Tarquin caught of the heroic Lucretia, was at her mirror, and not darning stockings, as some historians pretend. Marius, the conqueror of the Gauls, was sentenced to death; a centurion entered his dungeon with a drawn sword, in order to proceed to execution; but the sometime consul, recollecting a pocket glass which he constantly carried about him, (he being a great traveller,) managed to shake it in a dark corner of his cell, so as to impress the soldier with the dread of an avenging deity, and in this way escaped with a whole skin. Plutarch tells the story differently, "but there is no heed to be taken of him." He says, that the prisoner's eyes were so bright, (is this probable in a man upwards of ninety years' old?) that the executioner, overcome with terror, was unable to accomplish the fatal purpose of his visit. The reader must decide, which of these accounts has the most verisimilitude. Nero was certainly a monster of atrocity, yet he has been charged with many crimes which he never perpetrated. For instance, we are told "that Nero fiddled while Rome burned," and we are taught to believe that he fired the eternal city for his amusement: now what is the fact? Nero was very innocently "trying conclusions" with several concave and convex steel mirrors on a hot summer's day, when the sun, through their intervention, set fire to a heap of loose straw, on which the emperor was basking; and thus it appears, that the terrible conflagration alluded to is solely attributable to accident.

When liberty and the common wealth became old world tales in Rome, luxury and voluptuousness were carried to an excess, which is wholly without parallel in modern history. Tacitus informs us, that Livia, the wife of Augustus, had upwards of three thousand female slaves, and that each had her distinct office and duties, whence she derived her name. To particularise all these ministers of ostentation, would be tedious and unprofitable, yet we may enumerate a few,—as the slaves of the gardens, the slaves of the sudatorium, the slaves of the banquet, and last, not least, the slaves of the mirror. Imagination can easily overpass the gulph, interposed by oblivion and eighteen hundred years, between us and the age of the Cæsars. We stand at the toilette of Livia: we observe her captive maidens, the fair Circassian, the low-browed Armenian, the thick-lipped Ethiopian, the sallow Egyptian and the exquisitely formed Peloponnesian. They flock round their haughty

mistress with officious diligence ; the slaves of the jewels elevate and adjust her splendid tiara of gems—on her right hand, a beautiful Georgian girl effuses a cloud of rich perfumes from a golden censer, while on the left, a kneeling ennuich presents an ewer of porphyry ; two dark-eyed beauties of the Isle of Chio, are stationed at her feet, each playing on, and singing to, a lyre. Four African women support before her a steel mirror of dazzling brilliancy, and its lustre seems increased when contrasted with their dusky skins. The imperial dame, meanwhile, surveys these formidable preparations for the mysteries of dress, with a look of majestic indifference. She plays with a diamond larger and brighter than the sultan's, as if it were a Scotch pebble ; and puts by with contempt the pure orient pearl bracelets presented by her attendants. The precious metals she considers as worthless as the dust of her sandals, and beholds the Juno-like vision in her mirror, with the disdainful pleasure of self-complacency and gratified vanity.

Idle pomp and splendour—merely decorative, cumberous parade, and tasteless pagantry ; the barbarous abortions of those Eastern climes, “ where all, save the spirit of man, is divine,” during the age of the Crusades, excited a feeling of emulation in the bosoms of those knights and barons bold, to whom, war and “ ladye-love,” were the first and the last objects of life. Then the ponderous tapestries, which had exhausted the fingers, though not the patience, of our great-great-grandmothers—the achievements of King Arthur, and the enchantments of Merlin, were removed from the groaning walls, and the mirror, in all its fantastic varieties, supplied their place. Then too, the right honorable dames, and the beautiful spinsters of each illustrious house, where “ all the sons were brave, and all the daughters chaste,” forgot their chain and tent stitch, and neglected their tambour frames to gaze on that map of loveliness the “ human face divine,” as presented with admirable truth and precision, by those best monitors, and most innocent flatterers, their looking-glasses. The enamoured lady, anxious to express her good opinion of her fancy's lord, no longer, with laborious hands, executed his whole length, boots and all, in worsted or silk : no, but she led him with a smile of triumph to her mirror—and, bade him thank the gods that “ made him such a woman.” The Countess Dowager, half of whose day used to be employed at family prayer and in penning receipts for cordial waters and custards, and the other moiety in discussions with the chaplain “ on knowledge, fore-

knowledge, will and fate," now found a far more interesting occupation, in smoothing from her withered face the wrinkles of senility with emollient applications of may-dew, or sweet ointment, in the company of that dumb, unobtrusive friend, a chamber speculum. Courtship, that "honey-sweet season of existence," became more refined and imaginative; and "the gay creatures of the element," (for woman, dear woman, cannot be of the common clay, of which mere man is compacted) whose ears had so often drunk in the delicious sounds of "my life, my angel, and my heart," were convinced by their mirrors, that such homage was only their due, and commenced divinities without delay. Nor did they fail in their new characters—for never was Juno more haughty in her fabulous heaven, than the beauties of the seventeenth century, in our mutable planet, earth. Since then, Fashion, the goddess who wields a kaleidoscope for the sceptre of her empire, has exhausted all her fancies, and recommenced the series—but looking-glasses have continued in vogue; for to the ladies a mirror "is like the air they breathe, if they have it not, they die." How, indeed, could the fairies of the heart, whose smiles attract, and whose tears conquer, the fine Porcelain of nature, receive the gilding and enamelling, which, however fastidious our taste, adds so much to their influence, without the aid of those elegant luminous circles, which reflect so well the glory of youth and the brilliancy of beauty. When the conscious fair one blushes at the mirror, every charm of countenance, all the indescribable graces with which the soul irradiates the face, are reflected from its lucid expanse, with the bewitching languor and soft reposing sweetness of a dream. There the eye still beams brightly, intellectually; but, its lustre is more mild, and it falls on the heart, as the last ray of the evening sun descends on a parterre of flowers. There the glossy raven-coloured tresses undulate in all their luxuriance; and the pure, faultlessly arched, lofty forehead, rises in the majesty of loveliness. The lips, "like two red roses on one stalk," breathe enchantment; the paradise of the bosom dimly seen through its gauzy envelope, is rendered more beautiful by its partial concealment: the whole form, with its perfection of symmetry, its airiness of youth, and its spotlessness of innocence. But who can do justice to this living picture? Nature is the limner: "who can paint like nature?" yet art is her handmaid, and supplies her with looking-glasses.

Gentle reader—If thou hast any pleasure in perusing our discourse on the looking-glass, alias the mirror, alias the speculum,

employed on its more obvious and palpable form, as a reflector of the "human face divine," we trust thou wilt pay some attention to our recommendation of a Speculum, which has, for its object, to assist the adorning of our inner man, the beautifying of our "glassy essence" the soul, by affording a bird's eye view of its passions, pleasures and pursuits. To offer a recipient for the fugitive productions of genius, and to collect, as it were, into a focus, the mild glories of those lesser mental stars, which might otherwise overpowered by the dazzling brilliancy of those greater lights, which form, at present, the aristocracy of the literary heaven, is the principal intention of this work. The projectors, in the prosecution of their plan, ardently hope that, however imperfectly it may be executed, they shall be able to add something to the anatomy of the heart, something to our knowledge of the immortal tenant of our mortal bodies; and, in this hope, gentle readers, we bid thee heartily farewell. H.

Punctilio.

THERE are some persons, whose whole lives are made up of form and ceremony. They exist only in the display of what they term good-breeding; and in the interchange of those civilities, their nice observance of which would put to shame the *mauvaise honte* of plain every-day civility. I have often thought there must be something very delightful in all this; but could never effectually acquire the tact, nor shake off the unfortunate habit of letting my real sentiments peep out at every sentence; and while I should be busied in so couching my language, as to convey a negative or politely inoffensive meaning, I have blundered out some unwelcome truth, which has thrilled a well-bred party with horror. When asked my preference at table, instead of replying, "which you please," or "really, I have no choice," &c. &c. I have bluntly made my election, and spoken what I meant, with an unvarnished sincerity, which has excited the blushes of the whole company for my incorrigible rusticity. Nay, I have been rude enough to refuse a chair, purposely reserved for me by a blazing fire, for no other reason than because I was in a state of perspiration from the exertions I had used to be punctual to my appointment.

I had however suffered so much from this injudicious sincerity, and the inconveniences it entailed upon me were so numerous, that I at length determined to square my behaviour by the observ-

ances of etiquette, and to crucify those foolish sentiments of plain dealing and honest truth, which had hitherto been my bane. I reasoned with myself most logically on the folly of speaking what I thought ; formed a resolution on all occasions to slide in with the opinions of others, let them be ever so absurd ; to acquiesce in all that was said, though I knew it to be false ; and to have no one thought, feeling, or wish, that could properly be called my own. I studied Chesterfield, ransacked every library for essays on politeness, which I devoured with avidity ; and in short, philosophized so largely and so long, that I at length flattered myself, I had become the very Polonius of good breeding.

Mankind, I said to myself, have, in every age, been the slaves of ceremony. The saint and the savage, the enlightened and the ignorant, alike bow down before it ; and though it is an idol of our own creating, yet as common consent has united to give it importance, it must be both just and proper. I went on to reason that external impressions,—as a procession, a pageant or a review, artificial in themselves, and empty in the eye of the philosopher, have a powerful influence over the mind ; we view them in the abstract, without descending to the detail, or reflecting on the insignificance of its component parts. For instance, supposing, gentle reader, that you were seated in the pit of Drury Lane Theatre ; the curtain rises, and presents you with a grand *coup-d'œil* of Westminster Abbey, and the ceremony of the coronation ; you are struck with the magnificence that bursts upon your eye, and are involuntarily impressed with the solemnity of the occasion. But this impression results from viewing it as a whole. Descend to particulars, and what can be more ridiculous ? What is the place, and who are the persons, that have excited these feelings ? The place is the stage of a theatre ; the persons are plebeians hired for a trifle to take part in the pageant. The rich ermine and velvet robes are sheep's wool and flannel ; the gold and jewels are tinsel and coloured glass ; the Archbishop of Canterbury is a poor player, and the King himself is scarcely any more. Separate the constituent parts, and you laugh at yourself for falling in with the delusion. But if it should be contended that this is not a fair view of the subject, I will present you with another. Who is there that has not felt the reverential awe inspired by the interior of a cathedral ?—The solemn breathings of the organ ; the mellow, celestial radiance of the painted windows ; the lofty columns, the arched roofs, the marble tombs—are all the

work of man ;—the chauntings of the choir, the service of the altar, are ceremonies of mere human institution ; yet all tend to impress us with the immediate presence of the Deity ; then who will deny that the eye is the inlet to the heart, or that external circumstances possess a powerful influence over the minds and actions of men ?

In this view of the case I went on triumphantly, assuming as a necessary consequence, that the etiquette of private life was an emanation from the same source ; and that the same reasoning which applied to public forms and ceremonies, would affect that external reverence which mankind pay to each other, according to the prescribed formularies of good breeding.

I fell in with some details of Spanish manners, and there I found abundant food for meditation. How much I admired that precise, punctilious people ! and with what feelings, approaching to veneration, did I view the amazing self-possession and fortitude of Philip the Second, who suffered himself to be roasted to death, rather than violate the rules of etiquette by rising from his chair ! How delighted I was at the calm and dignified refusal of the grandee to lessen the fire, because it was the office of an attendant ; and how much I admired the philosophy with which he beheld his sovereign writhing in agony, rather than offend the rules of decorum by handling the fire tongs ! Neither shall I forget the impression made upon my mind by the commendable obstinacy of the two ladies of Spanish grandees, whose carriages happened to meet in a narrow lane, where one could not pass without giving way to the other. Rather than yield the point of precedence, they remained in that situation till midnight ; nor were they released till by mutual consent, they *backed out* simultaneously, and thus preserved their mutual dignity.

I was much pleased, too, with the conduct of the Dutch ambassador, who, in conformity with the rules of Chinese etiquette, knocked his head nine times on the ground, and licked the dust before the emperor's throne for twenty yards, so that when he reached the prescribed distance he was nearly choked with the *dryness* of the ceremony. I was much hurt, though, at finding, that, notwithstanding he went through this formula nine several times (making together ninety-nine knocks and about three times as many licks) he was ~~not~~ so fortunate as to obtain the object of his embassy. But I was not so well pleased with the behaviour of another ambassador, a very boorish sort of fellow, who refused to submit to the *grovelling*

ceremony. In order to compel him to bend the knee, the entrance to the imperial presence was made so small that he was forced to crawl to gain admission ; but he evaded the degradation, as he termed it, by going in *backwards*, to the no small mortification of the whole court.

While I am on the subject of ambassadors, let me record the abhorrence I felt at the unceremonious reception given by Peter the Great to the representatives of sovereigns, without the smallest attention to the rules prescribed by courtly etiquette. He was rude enough to say, that they were sent to be introduced to *him*, and not to his halls and palaces. When the grand Mareschal and ambassador of the Prussian court, Printz, wished to present his credentials to the czar, he was conducted on board an unfinished ship. Unaccustomed to this deficiency of ceremony, he demanded to be ushered into the presence of the Russian emperor. The attendant pointed to a man who was actively employed in arranging some ropes to the top of the mast. Peter (for such was the man) on recognizing the ambassador, called on him (oh barbarous boor !) to *ascend the shrouds !* but the astonished and indignant Prussian declined performing so new and dangerous a task. The monarch instantly descended, and held a conference with him on deck, where he manifested the same disregard to those forms, to execute which with becoming dignity is *justly* reckoned by some monarchs as the most essential duties of their exalted station.* But a solitary instance of Peter's regard to the rules of politeness in some measure redeemed him in my good opinion. In order to polish the Russian ladies, who had been heretofore immured like slaves in a seraglio, he established balls and assemblies, and in one of those parties of pleasure, boxed Prince Mentchikoff's ears, because he had forgotten to lay aside his sword during the dance.

I have heaped these anecdotes of punctilio together, which no doubt my readers have met with often enough before, for no other reason than to evince the sincerity with which I set about my own reformation in this particular. But my polite studies were not confined to books. I mixed with the best company ; and endeavoured to approximate to living examples of good breeding. I admired the philosophical complacency with which they smiled a welcome on

* Lettres du Prince Royale de Prusse et de M. de Voltaire, tom. lxxxiv. p. 307. Also Card's Revolutions of Russia, p. 608.

those, who, the moment before, were the subjects of their bitterest sarcasm; and the sympathy they expressed for parties present, whose reputations they had so unmercifully handled in their absence. This, however, was a species of politeness, which, I regret to say, I could never acquire. But I made up for it in other respects. If I met a friend in the street (one of the button-holders, I mean, described by Lord Chesterfield,) I patiently listened to his tedious harangue, without manifesting the least impatience, though every moment was fatal to my interest; and when he had finished, politely bade him good morning, with a complacency of countenance as opposite to my real feelings, as the shades of night to the "bright lustre of the risen day." In short, my respect for all the courtesies of life, and even the very minutiae of etiquette, was so conspicuous, that it obtained for me the title of the "Polite Philosopher." I was constantly invited to the best company; and was so altered a being, that I looked back with horror on those days of boorish rusticity, when, to the polite inquiry of "Pray, sir, is your tea to your liking?" I had been *temerarious* enough to reply "No;" and actually help myself to the ingredients which make the beverage palatable.

It happened about this time that I received a card of invitation from a friend, who had obtained a similar victory over early habits of veriloquy, and was sobered down from a free, jocund, plain spoken companion, to a polite, precise, punctilious pattern of ceremony. *His* example contributed not a little to my perseverance; and I was indebted to the reputation I had acquired, for the honour of this invitation, the first since his marriage, although the ceremony had taken place upwards of five years.

I must dilate a little here to give a description of my friend. In our early intimacy, he was, as I have before hinted, distinguished for the freedom of his behaviour. With that alliterative talent, for which he was famous, he used to call ceremony the cold confounded curse of civilized company; and was as free with a perfect stranger, as if he had been acquainted with him all his life. So little regard had he for the ordinary rules of politeness, that he would talk of deaths in the presence of a physician; guess ladies' ages with provoking correctness; and disappoint an author, who was finessing for praise. I have heard him ask a West India planter how often he flogged his slaves; and mourn the lot of old maids, when he was in the company of venerable spinsters. And this sort of conduct did not proceed either from inadvertency or a desire to

offend ; but from that carelessness of consequences, and determination to speak his mind, which, he contended, were the true criterions of independence. He agreed with Cowper, that

" Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear ;
And, at the bottom, barb'rous still and rude,
We are restrain'd, indeed, but not subdued."

A well-bred man, he would affirm, was no better than a hypocrite, who was either too timid or too prudent to speak the truth. Polite conversation was always artificial ; any thing was said but what was really meant ; thus free discussion was checked, and all the generous and noble feelings of our nature paralysed. What can be more ridiculous, he would ask, than conversation in which all the parties agree ; and instead of endeavouring to elicit truth by starting doubts to assertions, are only busied in ransacking their brains for arguments to strengthen them ? Not that they really acquiesce in what is said ; nothing can be more distant from their honest opinions ; but it is a mark of good breeding not to contradict ; and the very acme of politeness to confirm assertions by proofs which the assessor never imagined to exist.

It will no doubt be a matter of surprise, how such a man could have his asperities softened down to the very degree of smoothness it was the business of his life to condemn. Such, however, was the fact ; and the wonder will cease when I explain the mystery. It was his good or ill-fortune, (I shall not pretend to decide which) to marry a woman of some property, but more pride. She was of a good family, as they term it ; that is, she boasted a genealogy of honourable spendthrifts, who transmitted nothing to their descendants but gentle blood and barren acres. This honourable family, who would not sully their descent by honest industry, were well-nigh reduced to beggary, when the timely legacy of a rich cousin, about fifty times removed, and whose acquaintance they had shunned because he had disgraced his ancient blood by commercial pursuits, saved them from penury, and once more cemented the union of pride and riches. How my friend, who could boast no such exalted lineage, persuaded the lady to accept his hand, I cannot pretend to explain, but so it was ; and from that moment, the change, which I mentioned in my early notice of him, began rapidly to take place. I am at no loss to find a reason for this ; the necessity of conforming to the usages of that class of society into which he was thus suddenly thrown, and the

fear of exhibiting that nonchalance in which he had formerly prided himself, to lay no stress on the influence of his wife (no doubt the most powerful of the whole) will satisfactorily account for the change. But I have nothing to do with causes; I am only relating effects.

In brief, then, I accepted his invitation, with the resolution of letting him see, that Beau Nash Redivivus, as he was somewhat hyperbolically termed, was no match for the Polite Philosopher. He received me at the door of the drawing-room with a bow of well-bred decorum, which I returned with the most petrifying politeness. No reminiscences of ancient friendship were expressed by our lips; none of that foolish cordiality, and heartiness of feeling, we were at one time so ready to evince; no inquiries of "how have you been? and how do you do?" We had each learned to despise such vulgar sincerity. I was at first, I own, tempted to shake his hand with a "Jack, my dear fellow?" and my own was instinctively held out for a friendly grasp but I checked the impulse with admirable dexterity; and crushing the rising sentiment of friendship, met the punctilious salutations of the company (to whom I was separately introduced in all the pomp of ceremony) with the most withering formality. When I was seated, and the well-bred curiosity of the company, excited by the appearance of a stranger, was somewhat satiated, I ventured to steal a glance at my friend, whom I had hitherto scarcely dared to regard; and I was struck with the change which the short space of five years had effected. The jolly air of careless independence, which at one time marked his countenance, was exchanged for the most ceremonious, anti-democritical physiognomy I had ever beheld. His smile was like a casual gleam of sunshine over a barren heath, which is suddenly checked by the interposition of a passing cloud; it only peeped out at intervals, and his countenance so quickly resumed its primitive formality, that it seemed ashamed of having indulged in such a plebeian feeling.

I am aware that I shall here be suspected of delineating, not the manners of a gentleman, but those of a quaker. But let my readers recollect the general tendency of sudden transitions to overshoot the mark. "Be not righteous overmuch." My friend was so fearful of trespassing the bounds of decorum, that he did not dare to trust the ordinary expression of his feelings. In his dread of being too familiar, he became precise; and mistook formality and reserve for politeness and good-breeding. Nor let it appear singular, that I, who

trod the same steps, should so clearly perceive the error into which *he* had fallen. I am not merely detailing the impressions on my mind at this meeting, but am adding to those impressions that discernment which I had gained by after experience. It is very certain, that no one was deceived but himself; and while he imagined himself the pink of courtesy, he was set down by all his acquaintance as a mechanical movement of foolish formality.

Pardon this digression; and let me once more resume. It had been my usual habit, in my gone-by days of vulgarism, to fill up those chilling and truly English pauses, which occur in polite conversation, by some general remark, that should draw out a sentence of some kind or other from one of the party. But I had become wiser; and therefore sat in the silence of mysticism, shrouding my features with that formal no-meaning negativeness of expression, so conspicuous in the physiognomy of my friend. I was made up of monosyllables, and said yes and no to the few observations which were elicited, in polite acquiescence with the sentiments of others, without daring even to imagine, much less express, an opinion of my own.

"With hesitation, admirably slow,
I humbly hoped—presum'd it might be so,
.....
Knew what I knew, as if I knew it not,
What I remember'd, seem'd to have forgot;
My sole opinion, let whate'er befall,
Cent'ring at last in having none at all!"

Every thing went on smoothly; and the conversation was delightful. For example: My friend remarked that it was a fine day, and this produced five coincidences of opinion: viz. *Mr. A.* observed it was "Beautiful weather."—*Mrs. B.* "Very charming weather."—*Miss C.* "Delightful."—*Mr. D.* "Very pleasant weather, indeed."—*Mr. E.* "Fine weather for the harvest."—The latter observation was addressed to me; and I politely replied, "It is indeed."—Then ensued an appalling pause, which no one seemed inclined to break. I cannot say that I felt altogether at my ease. A sort of tingling sensation came over me. My eyes wandered from the carpet to the ceiling, from the ceiling to the fire-place; and from the fire-place, by a sort of reflective attraction, to the red nose of a gentleman opposite, till at last they incontinently fixed on the fair face of a young lady, who happening to raise at that moment her downcast eyes of cerulean hue, accidentally encountered mine, and suffused both our countenances with crimson. This was not to

be borne. I therefore endeavoured to remove our mutual embarrassment by inquiring if she had seen the last new tragedy. She had; and about five minutes more were consumed in recalling to each other's remembrance what each considered worthy of recollection; but as, unfortunately, the rest of the company had not seen this said tragedy, our conversation was carried on more as trials of the patience of the hearers, than for the amusement of ourselves, and rather tended to increase than lessen our confusion. But luckily, at this moment, an ugly French dog entered the room, and produced the interesting inquiry, from a middle-aged lady, of "Dear me, Mr. F. where did you get this beautiful animal?" And now the conversation became less interrupted; every one had something to contribute to so amusing a discourse; and all that *could* be said was said.

"Of hounds and grey-hounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves;"

till the utter exhaustion of the subject left a third hiatus, which however was very quickly supplied by other topics, and the icy coldness of reserve began to melt before that pleasant expression of opinion, wherein all are unanimous, while politeness forbids the intrusion of a dissentient voice.

This was the very acme of intellectual enjoyment. Argument or disputation, contradiction or doubt, were alike suppressed, and no one hazarded a sentiment, which he was not previously assured would be favorably received. So far all went on smoothly; and I felt no small self-satisfaction at the manner in which I conducted myself, and the strictness of my conformity with the rules of etiquette. But the fiery ordeal was not yet passed.

As the interchange of sentiment began to glow, the choice of subjects became less scrupulous; and my friend, who, by-the-bye, enjoyed a snug post under government, introduced politics, assured that the sense of decorum in his guests would certainly let a man have his own way in his own house. Perhaps this was the only subject which could bring my newly acquired politeness to a sincere test. I had openly confirmed or tacitly agreed to the sentiments of others, on subjects which are ordinarily contested. I smiled assent to what I did not understand, and was vehement in my support of what I did. I was "a comfortable hearer;" and where I could not approve, I was at least too polite to condemn. But it so happened, that my friend, (with whose political opinions, by-the-bye, my own were completely at variance) presuming on the silent acquiescence of his

guests, at first cautiously hinted, and then openly expressed, his opinion, on what he was pleased to term the licentiousness of the press. He quoted the opinions of every tyrant that ever lived on the danger of allowing the free expression of public opinion. He had at his fingers' end all the arguments which venal ministers or their parasites had ever jumbled together, to prove the expediency of extinguishing the freedom of this organ of public opinion; and though he began by deprecating all attempts to quench the glorious spark of liberty; though he eulogized the art of printing as the day-star of knowledge, the lamp of truth, the dispeller of the mists of ignorance, yet he managed at length to insinuate, and ultimately to assert, that nothing but a firm and decided censorship, a strict political inquisition over public sentiment, could save us from anarchy, or secure the dignity of the throne, and the just and rational liberties of the people.

During this harangue I sat motionless. I felt my blood rush tumultuously through my veins; the fire of indignation mantled in my cheeks. But, like the ghost in Monk Lewis's ballad, "I spoke not, I moved not, I looked not around;" I gathered together all the energies of my mind, all the sentiments of politeness, to prevent my bursting the bands of decorum. I placed before my eyes the rudeness of contradicting a man at his own table; the forfeiture of all that reputation for politeness, I had with so much labour acquired; the exchange of my title of the Polite Philosopher, for that of the Uncivilized Boor. My lips quivered; I waxed pale and red by turns; I was convulsed with feelings, which I strained every nerve to repress. But all would not do. The paroxysm was at its height, and could not be controlled. I resembled the madman, of whom it is related, that he conversed rationally on every subject, till the point was touched upon, which had deprived him of his senses. Like the glass-man in the Arabian Nights, I destroyed in a moment all the bright visions of my brain; and burst out in a strain of enthusiasm, which must have seemed little else than madness:

"So!" I exclaimed, when he had finished, "you would crush the freedom of thought,—the liberty of the press!—our vital air, without which we cannot breathe; and "if we have it not, we die!" You would annihilate the dearest privilege of Englishmen; and sacrifice public opinion at the shrine of tyranny. A bosom like yours is alone worthy of such a thought; none but the pandar of a minister, the hireling of a court, the slave of a party, would have dared to utter

such a sentiment.—You would sell your birthright for a mess of pottage, your country's freedom for a sordid sinecure. But beware, lest, while plotting your country's ruin, you secure your own; and be assured, that however you may be self-exalted, however the parasites of power may fling before you the incense of adulation, in the minds of honest men you are debased, despised, execrated!"

I paused. I looked around. The countenance of mine host was suffused with the blushes of shame, and the crimson fire of indignation. "The guests sat in silence and fear;" they were shocked at my vulgar sincerity, and were fixed to their seats, dumb, spiritless, motionless. The face of the red-nosed gentleman was blanched with terror; and his nasal organ seemed like the beet-root peeping forth from a field of snow. He was the humble expectant of a vacant post, for which my friend had pledged his influence; and was so amazed at my temerity, that he seemed petrified. I rose from my seat; I offered no apology, I made no bow, I uttered no adieu. The wounds I had inflicted on the tender nerves of etiquette I felt were too deep to be healed by *lip-salve*. I rushed out of the room, seized my hat, and left the house, cursing etiquette, ceremony, punctilio, politeness and decorum from the bottom of my soul. And here I am, once more stripped of the artifice of politeness, and reduced to the plain blunt being which nature made me. I am shut out from all my well-bred acquaintance; I have lost my title of the Polite Philosopher; I am set down as more uncouth than "the rugged Russian bear," and in the fulness of my heart, have thus detailed my sufferings, that you, Sir, and your readers, may shun the rock on which I split; nor flatter yourselves with a belief, that the man of sincerity and feeling can ever be an adept in politeness, or a pattern of *Punctilio*.

*

The Broken Harp.

Do you remember the last sweet tone

Of this dear harp, now broken?

Do you remember the days long flown,

Since last that tone was spoken?

Oh! often at night it came like the light

Of some angel earth-ward flying,

Whose heavenly wings had touch'd the strings,

And soften'd the sound with her sighing.

Do you remember the melting flow
 Of song that would blend with its breathing?
 Do you remember the arms of snow,
 That once were around it wreathing?
 Oh! if from above, a spirit of love
 On earth was ever gleaming,
 That spirit wert thou, on whose beautiful brow
 The sweetness of heaven was beaming.

This harp has not waked to a hand since that one
 Is cold that could touch it so sweetly;
 This heart has not warm'd to a beam since that sun
 Which kindled it faded so fleetly;
 And the harp and the heart, to which she could impart
 Such magic would never have spoken,
 If the strings could have flown without waking a tone
 Of tenderness as they were broken.

M. LEMAN REDE.

The Letter Sylph.

No. 2.

"My tricky Spirit!"

"What say you, Sir, to letters from your friends!"—SHAKESPEARE.

To the Editor of the Literary Speculum.

SIR,—You enter into my conceit with true editorial spirit, and having once found a channel, rely upon it the stream of my good will shall not be interrupted by a trifle; although I promise you, Mr. Speculum, my task is none of the simplest. Figure to yourself an embarrassed commentator, prying for some elucidatory passage amongst a thousand dusty relics of black letter, flinging folio after folio aside, with all the fretfulness of disappointment, yet compelled to prosecute his ungrateful toils, and, in all probability, with little success at last. I say, Sir, imagine this, and you may form

some idea of your humble servant, in his labours of research through the dense masses of epistolary correspondence, daily disgorged by that monster of intelligence, the general post. Sheet after sheet, of the most incorrigible dullness, pedantry, and conceit, drops from my impatient fingers; and had not the purity of my essence pretty well rejected by this time such particles of your grosser elements, as, during my immersion in the liquid wax, it naturally became contaminated with, I should certainly fly off at a tangent, and leave you to pilfer for yourself. As it is, I keep my temper indifferently well, though not exactly with the unruffled serenity of the Frenchman,* whom nothing earthly could irritate.

I trust soon to attain the peculiar *tact* of judging intuitively, as it were, by a single glance at the characters on the superscription, what epistles are, in reality, most adapted to your pages, which, if accomplished, will save an immensity of time, labour, and *ennui*, into the bargain. Many, of a particular class, I already toss apart, without the trouble of a second look, as conceiving your readers would feel little interested in "Please to forward, per Exeter Van, the undermentioned articles,"—"Have drawn as per advice,"—"We hand you our prices current, and have shipped to your order," &c. &c. &c. Such epistles, too, as Crabbe speaks of, I avoid at first glimpse:

"Letters of love, all full and running o'er,
The paper fill'd till it can hold no more,
Cross'd with discolour'd ink, the doublings full,
No fear that love should find abundance dull;
Love reads unsat'd all that love inspires,
When most indulg'd, indulgence still requires;
Looks what the corners—what the crossings tell,
And lifts each folding for a fond farewell!"—

Mercy upon us! whether *your* patience would sink under such an infliction, I know not, but as Ariel says,

"Mine would, Sir, were I mortal."

'Twas a merry world, Mr. Editor, when the scribbling mania was restricted to the learned solely; when scarcely the king himself was clerkly enough to sign a state-deed, or the priest to decypher three sentences of his missal,—when a nobleman would thank the saints devoutly, that his sons knew not how to pen a line,† like he of the bleeding heart in the old days of Caledonia—Pleasant had

* Fontanelle.

† Earl Douglass in "Marmion."

been my task of selection in those times, when the worst I could have apprehended would have been now and then the trifling inconvenience of meeting with no letters at all.

The Epistle I now present you with, appears to me to be somewhat of a singular cast. The fairies catch me if I can guess how the writers managed to convey it into the letter-box. I found it, Sir, perdue in a snug corner, keeping a most dignified distance from the ordinary herd of mercantile, amorous, petitioning, prying, and complimentary communications, which daily flock in such abundance to that emporium of letters, the Lombard Street Post Office; and beshrew me! but it had a most sulphureous smell; the exhalations which arose from it, did, as it were, offend my ethereal organs "most abominably." For you must know, friend Spec. (you see I have descended to be familiar) that we of the ærial element have our olfactory nerves much keener, even than those of your Elizabeth, who scented Essex's boots at a hundred yards' distance; and I assure you, were it not to repay the debt of gratitude I owe, I should not have hazarded the shock. However, here it is—I am no commentator, to hold my "farthing candle to the sun," but I think it worth your acceptance, and though the writers are *immaterial*, I flatter myself it will not be read without interest.

For another month, then, adieu!

LALLAH.

Epistle from Beaumont and Fletcher, Christofer Marlow, Robert Davenport, Roger Ascham, Leonard Lawrence, &c. &c. in the Shades, to Master Robinson, Editor of the "Retrospective Review," in London.

"Mercury—Hale mee not, prethee, on this fashion:

But take some small commiseration

Upon a *pauvre diable*,

Unjustly made thus miserable.

.....

Hast thou the stonie heart to rate

And use mee thus in this estate?

.....

Prometheus.—Faith! thy defence now comes too late;

But if thou hast a minde to prate,

Wee'll give thee hearing." *The Scoffer Scoft.*

MOST ERUDITE SIR,—Peradventure it may call forthe thy admiration, that wee, who are in our affections strained from all earthlie

grossnesse, should be moved to indite an epistle to a coldlie conceptive and calmlie calculating creature of claie, intituled a critick. Albeit, lett thy wonderment cessate; and knowe, thatt, inasmuche as wee were in some sorte carelesse of our posthumous fame, while we sojourned among the livinge, soe doe wee now deeme it prophaine of posteritie to disturbe the rubbishe, which had so long tyme laine in oblivious concealemente. Whereuppon, you will devine, that *you* have mainlie contributed, in divers particulars, to our distaste in this respecte; and forasmuch as you have to learne, that sundrie packets from the visible worlde, containinge certaine tractates and criticisms doe reach us, (by paying Charon the ferrie-man his dues for the transportinge thereof,) and which doe in greate sorte contribute to the delightinge and eddifyinge of our partie; soe doe wee from tyme to tyme receive *your* lucubrations, the which doe oft'-times fill us with much travaile and amazement. And take note, that we opine, that the tymes presente are not soe much by you benefitted by this proceedure, as the tymes past are disparaged by the unjudgmented dragginge forthe of what had more advisedlie remained hidden and concealed in its primeval obscurement.

Felicitous it was for us auncients (as our Will Shakespeare doth oft-times righte-merrilye and conceitedlye boaste) that in our daie we fortun'd not to bee constained by diurnal, hebdomadal, or monthlie criticks, the which doe sore perplex and crampe the aspiements of your moderne conceites; wee setting lightlie by the strictures of contemporaneous authours, prefixed to bulkie tomes, which were made manifeste but as once in a centurie; and likening such strictures withall to a fleshe wounde, deepe but sanable, which, peradventure, might advantage the partie; but holding moderne tractates on authours' braines, to be as the sharpe punctures of a calid needle, the whiche being thruste ever and anon into the naked fleshe, doth sett the partie a writhinge madlye, in continuall and never ceasinge agonie, wherebye hee wists not how he may be ridden of his sore tormentor; and would more readilie give up the ghoste outrighte, than be subjected to such distastes.

But it hath soe happened, that whereas this barbarous hackinge and hewing of reputations hath obtained among you modernes, so doth it mainlie disease our societie, sundrie of whom affecte your fashions, and doe much disquiete the peaceable and well-disposed members of these regions, by their jibes and jeerings. There are

divers of them, forsoothe, who sett downe for noughte the judgmente of the olden tyme, and doe esteeme the merites of authours, not by the scholastick rules of Aristotle, but (*lucus à non lucendo*,) by the arbitrament of your cunninglie devised Reviews and Magazines; and soe it doth fall out, that at each revival of our long buried conceites, they doe assemble as it were in synode, and recitinge aloud your judgments, applaude to the echoe or degrade to the duste, such of us as have, in our daies of the flesh, wielded the grey goose quille. And verilie, it doth sorelie galle and disquiete divers gentil poetasters, (who devining not of your handie-works, did console themselves mightilie, in the thoughte, that their lucubrations were sleepinge quietlie in oblivion) to finde them dragged forthe, and extolled, to the noe small regalement of their compeers.

In briefe, Master Robinson, be it known unto you, that the upshott of all these distastes hath beene the turninge of the Shades into a verie Babel. Here, you woudd discern a madde authoure ravage in sadde sorte about Blackwood and his hackinge knife; and there you would descrye another making sadde moane and grimace, for reason that Ben Johnson had espyed him sett downe for a witte in the *Retropective Review*, and would entreate him after this fashion, *videlicet*, cunninglie biddinge him to be of goode cheere and take hearte, for that he was a greate and wittie authoure, the which he was sorely discomforted that he had not discerned before; and how sadde pitie it was that his greate merites were not dulye rated till he was dead and gone. Then would the poore authore, who well devined Ben Johnson's satiricks, fall to raving at your malfesance in raking up his tomes, the which he wished had never been made publicke, and having once seene "quietlie inurned" as Will Shakespere hath itt, did opine they would never more be dragged forthe for the admiration of the vulgar. Nor lett it amaze you withall, that many of us doe esteeme lightlie of the travaile of our own braines; for you are to take note, that the mists and vapours of vanitie are dispelled and banished from our first ingress into these regions; wherefore your lauding of our cogitations doth oft times sorely disquiete us, we having, as it were, the veil removed from our eyes, by which we discern that we merite it not; and such indiscreete commendations, therefore, are to us as the degustation of a cuppe of wormwode, being exceedingly unsavorie and bitter.

In goode soothe and brevitie, you are to understande, that these

continuall disquietings did sorelie annoie and discomforte Kyng Pluto, (who is evermore very gloomie withal, and is not minded to be disturbed, and letted in his cuppes) and did likewise call forthe the ire and exceedinge greate wrathe of his helpmeet, Mistresse Proserpine, who is a bitter shrewe withall, and leadeth us sadde lives, soe that, in the upshotte, we were faine to cast aboute for some device to eschew this calamitie. And the which we were the more goaded and pricked on to doe, by reason that Pluto did sorelie threaten us with sundrie distasteful punishments and signall markes of his displeasure; seeing (quoth he) that admonishments and gentil means are of noe availe and altogether bootlesse.

Thereuppon wee did consorte together; and though at first we wot not what to doe; yet we did at length agree, that inasmuch as if wee could remove the cause, the effecte would cessate and discontinue, so wee would lay before you this exemplar of our distastes (the which wee have verilie recorded,) admonishing you no more to hale us over your *Retrospective* gridiron, on perill of our sore displeasure and resentment, the which, if you prove immorigerous, wee can putt into pratique, to your no smalle discomforte and amazement.

Wee did think it adviseable also to admonishe you respecting your craftie ragerie, (as Dan Chaucer hath it,) on the gentil publicke, by the which, for the noe small coste of five goode schillings, you doe continue to eke out, at the expense of us auncients, your monthlie divertisement, and by the travaile of mechanicke skill in the fair imprintinge thereof, doe soe entice the eye as to misleade the judgmente, and to be noted and sett down, forsoothe, for a righte learned and notable criticke. We praie you to avoid this; though we doe verilie acquit you of singulartie in this particular, opining that Master Campbell, in his publishment yclep'd the *New Monthly Magazine*, (as well as divers others) doth oft-times obtaine greate credite for the merite thereof, when peradventure suche merite appertaineth rather to the typographicke crafte, and faire white paper, than to the travaile of brains with which it aboundeth.

Wee pray the muses to hold you in their keeping, and soe courteouslie bid thee farewell.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER
CHRISTOFER MARLOW
ROBERT DAVENPORT
ROGER ASCHAM
LEONARD LAWRENCE.

(Cum multis aliis.)

From the Shades,
x die Novembris,
MDCCCXXI.

A Vision of Death.

The day was done,
The bright ey'd sun
O'er western worlds in beauty shone:
Worldlings vain had sunk to sleep,
Save those whom sorrow taught to muse,
Who sadly watch'd to weep,
Nor could in slumber's poppy dew
Their heavy eye-lids steep.
Death in darkness took his rounds,
'Mid unearthly sights and sounds—
The screech-owl's boding cry,
The night-wind's dismal sigh,
The flapping of the raven's plumes
O'er ruin'd and neglected tombs,
The shriek of Pain invoking Death—
The weird dance on the blasted heath,
Where horrid mysteries that shun the light,
Take refuge under the black cope of night.
O'er a battle-field his chariot roll'd,
Blood moisten'd the unhallow'd mould;
And a light phosphoric seem'd to flow
From the putrifying mass below—
And those that rais'd a turf might see,
(Alas, for poor mortality!)
Fest'ring under the rank green sod—
Proud man, the image of his God!
Mothers—widows—a ghastly train,
Thin ghosts—hung o'er his chariot wain—
And many a broken-hearted maiden,
Her bosom with cureless anguish laden,
From bloodless—motionless lips—breath'd low
The frenzied wail of despairing woe.
Form, nor shape, distinct had he;
But 'twas his obscurity;

Terrors felt, tho' undefin'd,
 Chill'd the heart, and aw'd the mind—
 Checking the warm blood in its courses,
 Freezing life's fountain at the sources.

The grisly tyrant's guards were nigh ;
 Pain that can neither sleep nor die ;
 Disease, self-loathing—and pale Penury.—
 War, Famine, Pestilence, triumvirate dire—
 And close attending, Earthquake, Flood and Fire :
 Then Murder, the foul birth of hell,
 When Abel by a brother fell !

One of his hands was convulsively clench'd,
 The other in madness unconsciously wrench'd
 From his head, which a single hour turn'd grey,
 A blood-bedabbl'd lock of hair away.

Maniac Suicide succeeded,
 All unheeding—by all unheeded—
 The dagger in his gripe, was gilt
 In his own heart-blood to the hilt ;
 His marbl'd countenance appear'd
 With the light'nings of judgment sear'd ;
 And his fix'd expressionless eyes were as dull
 As the sightless balls in a dead man's skull.

Spectre-like Consumption came—
 His thin attenuated frame
 So flaccid and so ghastly bare,
 The bones shook in each breath of air,
 Fiend-born Melancholy follow'd,
 Whose bed in a grave is hollow'd ;
 That delights to look on misery,
 And feed on its heart, till agony
 Is chang'd at length, from sullen sadness,
 To frenzy fierce, to moon-struck madness—

And Lunacy, her wayward child,
 Fickle as winds—as tempests wild,
 And trembled oft with rage or fear,
 But never—never shed a tear :
 Curs'd with the fever of the brain,
 Smote with unutterable pain,
 He rais'd his eyes to heav'n in vain,
 Then fix'd them on the earth again.

All the woes that render life
One incessant scene of strife ;
Fear and Jealousy and Anguish,
Griefs that grow while pleasures languish—
Round their mighty master flock'd,
And the hopes of mortals mock'd :
Nature, for dread, scarce drew her breath,
And on her pallid brow,
Whence sanguine drops did flow,
In characters of flame was written " Death !"
The bright moon lost her brilliancy,
If a star shone, 'twas mistily—
Earth grew a desert in his wrath,
The sweet flow'rs faded from his path—
The birds fell lifeless from the trees,
Forgot their love-taught melodies,
And the green leaves wither'd by swift degrees.
The stag to 'scape the danger fled—
Fate's bolt found him, he dropp'd dead :
Prone fell the ruminating ox,
And with his prey, the felon fox.
But man is thy game, thou hunter fell !
A passing groan, and a passing bell,
Announce thy triumphs, thou archer dark—
And oh ! thou lovest a lofty mark—
For in hearts which virtue mails the strongest,
For of lives which hope would have the longest,
Thy fatal arrows first thou slakest—
Thy prey in the bloom of youth thou makest.
Stern king of terrors ! whither, whither,
Rolls thy swift chariot—com'st thou hither ?
Then softly lay thy hand of pow'r
Upon my head, that life's last hour
May pass like a delightful dream,
Bright with some rainbow-colour'd gleam,
From those blest realms of joy, that lie
Remote from tear of mortal eye ;
Regions, where want, and pain and grief are o'er—
Where Death expires, and the tomb yawns no more.

The Brickmaker.

"Every inordinate cup is unbless'd,
And th' ingredient a devil."

SHAKESPEARE.

IN a small village, near the town of Montpelier, in France, lived a Journeyman Brickmaker, whose name was Montauban. His wife and six young children depended for support on the wages of his labour, which would have been sufficient for their comfortable subsistence, had not an unfortunate propensity to drinking continually interrupted his employment, and plunged both himself and his family into the greatest distress. It happened that the magistrate of the place was a very grave, sober-minded man: he had long beheld, with a censoring eye, the excesses of our hero, and at length summoned him to his tribunal, where, after many severe admonitions, he gave him to understand, that unless his conduct was amended, himself and family should speedily be removed from that district. The poor man returned home with a heavy heart, and, taking up an old Latin Prayer Book, (which, we may observe, contained the likenesses of several saints and martyrs,) kissed it with much reverence, and ejaculated a solemn vow to abstain from wine for the space of three months.

The good effects of this resolution soon appeared; he was now able, not only to support his wife and children, but at the close of each day, could lay up a few pieces, as a store to meet future wants. In a short time, our Brickmaker, who had been considered the meanest fellow in the village, began to be respected by his neighbours, and, what was of more consequence, he began to respect himself. Two months had hardly elapsed, when, counting the money he had saved, he found sufficient to purchase a horse and cart; these were soon bought; and a builder of Montpelier, seeing his industry, and anxious to encourage it, gave him an order for a thousand bricks. And now Montauban began seriously to think of commencing master; enough was soon earned to procure the materials necessary for executing his commission, and the bricks being finished, and neatly piled in his newly acquired cart, having tenderly embraced his dear spouse, he gave Dobbin a loving pat on

the shoulder, who, understanding it to be the signal of march, they jogged off very cheerfully, taking the Montpelier Road.

The journey for the most part proved as delightful as the morning, which was a very fine one, in the month of May. Nothing remarkable happened to our traveller, till he arrived within half a mile of his destination; when, by ill luck, his eyes encountered the sign-post of an inn. A young Bacchus was represented astride on a wine cask, and holding in each hand bunches of ripe grapes. It was too great a temptation for poor Montauban to resist; he made several efforts to get past, but they were fruitless, his fortitude failed him. He consigned his horse and cart to the care of a country boor, and crossing the inn-door threshold, advanced to the bar, where, quite forgetful of the Prayer Book on which, and the saints and martyrs by which, he had sworn, he called for a pint of wine. The liquor being drawn, he seated himself in a room filled with persons who were likewise on their way to Montpelier; amongst them he discovered some of his former bottle companions, who expressed great satisfaction at the meeting. His wine pitcher was soon emptied, and his good friends declared it should be replenished; he more than complied, by ordering an additional quart. His imagination was now heated, and in a little time the fumes of intoxication clouded the light of reason: he amused the company by performing several very ridiculous pranks, and at last rising from the bench on which he sate, addressed them in the following words: "Sirs, my very excellent friends, when we met formerly I was a poor journeyman Brickmaker, but now, thanks to our Lady, I'm a master. You see that cart—observe the well-conditioned horse that stands in it—count, if you please, the well burnt bricks it contains. The whole is mine; the load cost me one hundred francs, and in half an hour it will bring me two. That will enable me to deal more largely; and shortly, I have no doubt, I shall be the most substantial Brickmaker, within twenty miles of Montpelier. When this happens, I shall easily succeed that crabbed old dog, Villeroy, the magistrate of our village. 'Tis true, he holds a royal commission, but if the king don't see my superior merit he's a ———." Here the host entered, and very drily informed our orator, that his horse and cart were in the river; "In the river!" he exclaimed eagerly. "Yes, Monsieur," rejoined Boniface, "your horse grew restive, the boor could not hold him, and your bricks are now lining the bed of the river." Montauban rushed from the room, followed by the

company, and soon reached the fatal spot. He beheld the inn-keeper's tale sadly verified. His cart was empty, and the horse struggled violently, but vainly, to extricate himself. To render assistance was impossible, for the river was both broad and deep.

It had happened, that during Montauban's speech, a police officer was sitting in an adjoining room, who hearing the king and the magistrate treated so disrespectfully, instantly resolved to procure a warrant against the offender. This he soon obtained, and with the usual attendants, hastened back to the inn, to see it enforced. Here, being made acquainted with the culprit's misfortune, he proceeded without loss of time to the river. There stood the hapless Brickmaker, bitterly lamenting his fate. "The bricks are gone, the horse is drowning, and the cart is broken," said he: "You are my prisoner," cried the officer, who had now come up. "Alas! Dobbin," continued Montauban, "if I had the money, I could not find so good a beast as thou wert." "You are my prisoner!" exclaimed the officer more vehemently; but Montauban went on with his lamentations. "Ah, this comes of vow breaking! Dobbin, Dobbin, thou art lost for ever!" The officer now bade the attendants manacle his victim, and clapping him rather roughly on the shoulder, repeated with the voice of a stentor, "you are my prisoner." Montauban awoke from his stupor of distress; he turned and beheld the ministers of the law; he looked down and saw the fetters that bound him. "What is my offence?" cried he, frantically: "Truly," replied the officers, "you have spoken bitter things of the government." Misery had by this time dissipated the fumes of intoxication, and our poor Brickmaker exclaimed, as the prison-door closed on him, "Oh, wine! thou hast undone me!"

H.

The Passions.

"My Masters—Are you mad!"—TWELFTH NIGHT.

'Tis a mighty fine song Master Collins has sung,
 Of the Passions and Music of yore,
 When her instruments sweet, from the boughs where they hung,
 Those *passionate* gentlemen tore.

But I think I've a tale as romantic and wild

As Collins could plan for his soul,

Of Music, when merely a chattering child,

She lov'd o'er the woodlands to stroll.

One eve she enchantingly pour'd forth a tune

On the winds that career'd by her cell ;

Tho' whether 'twas play'd on the harp or bassoon—

On my word, I can't readily tell !

No doubt 'twas a rich and enrapturing sound,

With many a soft-dying fall,—

But a groupe of fantastics sprang suddenly round,

And Miss Music of course gave a squall.

First *Pride*, with an air of pomposity, swore

"Such a slave he had long wish'd to keep ;"

And *Sloth* mutter'd next, in a voice like a snore,

"How divinely she'd lull him to sleep !"

And palsy-struck *Avarice* tottering there,

Said in querulous accents and slow,

"What a mint from the crowd at Bartholomew fair

"Little *Music* would make in a shew !"

But *War* shook the plume o'er his helmet and cried,

"When his phalanx to battle he led,

Spite of *Avarice*, *Sloth*, or the pompous *Sir Pride*,

Little Music should play at its head."

And the claimants grew loud, and said terrible things,

Spite of Music's entreaties and cries,

When a chubby-faced boy, upon butterfly-wings,

Popp'd down as tho' dropp'd from the skies.

He and Miss, it appear'd, had been cronies of old,

For the moment the urchin came there,

She started on tip-toe, undaunted and bold—

Which of course made the Passions all stare.

And the urchin return'd her an arch kind of leer,

Which, be sure, had some wickedness in it ;

For he laughingly whisper'd a word in her ear,

Then snatch'd her on high in a minute !

That Music had wings, in an instant she found,
 For they started up feather by feather,
 And from that joyous moment the sweet Queen of Sound
 And the young God of Love fly together!

Walworth.

J. G. G.

Authorship.

"Here's matter deep and dangerous;"

"Is there no offence in't?" SHAKESPEARE.

I HAVE often thought that the author by profession must be either a very pitiable, or a very contemptible being. There is something so revolting in the idea of a traffic of brains, that we cannot easily reconcile it with those notions of nervous sensitiveness and intellectual refinement, we imagine peculiar to the literary mind; nor avoid shrinking from the thought of bringing the energies of the soul and the feelings of the heart to market, to be disposed of to the best bidder, subject to the caprices of the buyer and the petty chafferings of trade.

Imagine, for instance, a literary labourer, doomed to drudge in the geometrical ratio of so much per sheet, as the carpenter is hired to work by the foot, or the weaver by the yard. Conceive him exerting all his powers of amplification, that he may increase his pecuniary advantage; and, having completed his task, submitting it with trembling deference to some fat-headed, purse-proud bookseller, too ignorant to judge, yet ready enough to condemn, and what must be your estimate of such a man? You will either pity the necessity, which has reduced him to this humiliation; or despise the mental debasement, which could bend him to such a prostitution of his talents. Perhaps you would be imbued with a portion of either feeling; for pity and contempt are very nearly associated.

The anecdote of Dryden and Tonson is well known; I merely quote it, as illustrative of this part of my subject. The inexorable bookseller, after bargaining for a certain number of lines at per

hundred, insisted upon having the admirable Ode on Alexander's Feast, thrown in as a makeweight; nor would he fulfil his contract till Dryden had agreed to it! Have we not here the degradation of genius to the letter, and the traffic of intellect in its most humiliating form? I should certainly think so, if another anecdote of a still more debasing nature did not occur to my memory. Oldmixon (whom Pope, by-the-bye, has honored with a niche in the Dunciad,) tells us that "one Mr. Heveningham *bought* a dedication of Motteux, haggled with him about the price, and bargained for the number of lines and the superlatives of eulogy; not contented with this, he wrote the dedication *himself*, and made the miserable author put his name to it!!" The most obtuse intellect must have been wounded by such a degradation;—imagine, if it be possible, any-thing more repulsive to a sensitive mind.

Of what materials then is an author by profession compounded? Are his nerves so firmly strung by habit as to receive these shocks with indifference? or while he outwardly submits to insult, are his feelings inwardly lacerated? In either case my argument is established; he must be pitied or despised; but it is worthy of remark, that if habit has so far blunted the edge of his feelings, as to render him callous to these attacks on his sensibility, it is impossible that his sentiments on any subject can be sincere. Horace says

".....Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi."

If you would have me weep, first weep yourself.

But such a man cannot be susceptible of feeling. He is the tool of another; the organ of any sentiment; the passive defender or opposer of any opinions, just as they happen to accord with his pecuniary interest. He has the literary forte, and can deck any argument with the guise of truth. Whoever pays best, will be best served; but as to himself, he is a purely negative being. Inquire his real sentiments, and he has none; for the habit of writing for hire has blunted his perception to what is right; and he only knows, that certain arguments are applicable to certain cases, which he makes use of, just as they happen to suit the cause he has undertaken to defend.

The association of poverty and poets, authors and adversity, is ludicrously proverbial. Mention a poet, "and, in a trice," we have a classical recollection of garrets, thread-bare clothes, hungry

bellies, and darned stockings ; and Grub Street, with all its fame, rushes into our memory, as if it were still the refuge of half starved literati. But it may be questioned whether all this has only begot the aforesaid ludicrous association, without attaching to it any suspicion of its reality ; whether we do not laugh at the idea of a poverty-struck bard, as if he were a creature of purely imaginative existence. The success of some of our modern writers, and the immense fortunes they have reaped from the patronage of the public, must greatly contribute to this belief ; and to the discarding as apocryphal, the idea of a man of genius being destitute of bread. Perhaps it may be so, in a strictly literal sense ; but who shall say that authors are not bought and sold, like any other species of merchandise, when they recollect how many are induced, for pecuniary emolument, to espouse any political or polemical opinion, in opposition to the honest conviction of their own minds ? The trade of authorship, when we view it in all its nakedness,—when we are admitted to a peep behind the bibliographical curtain, is, indeed a most contemptible one ; and the comparative respectability of those who follow it, as a profession, does not always so much arise from their having received the fair reward of their genius, as from the lucky adaption of that genius to the fortunate speculations of a publisher. For instance, a work is projected, or a periodical publication started, merely as a commercial venture,—and often by individuals, who have but little idea of literary talent, and of course are not capable of appreciating its excellence. An editor is to be found ; this is no difficult matter,—they are “as plenty as blackberries ;” certain political or religious principles are to be upheld, and without a scruple, the accommodating editor, who has probably been just employed on the contrary side of the question, shifts, with the versatility of a Proteus, to the views of his new employers, and writes you “in good set terms,” in praise of that, which it was just before his interest and his study to condemn.

Perhaps it is difficult to conceive a more obvious insult to the public understanding, than the arbitration of literary taste and judgment, assumed by reviews. The attempt to direct popular opinion on religious or political subjects, is less to be wondered at ; for the mass of mankind is large, general discernment limited, and those who reason for themselves comparatively few ; they are topics too of universal interest, and on which we can scarcely expect an unanimity of opinion. But books, in a general sense, do not possess

this *personal* quality; they are matters of taste, not of individual feeling; and those who study them, must be supposed to have some discernment of their own: frequently more than the arbiters who pretend to direct it. Is there not then something arrogant in the attempt to dictate, where there exists so little inequality of judgment?—in this exclusive *nosism*, which, under the shelter of anonymous concealment, deals condemnation, with an unsparing hand, among those who differ in opinion, and heaps pangyric as gross where they happen to agree? If in this general and abstracted view of the subject, such conclusions appear obvious, who will deny their correctness, when the veil, which skreens the chicanery of periodical criticism, is removed? Personal feeling and party-spirit are the main-springs which guide the machinery of reviews: general good, the stalking-horse by which the public are so often blinded, is the *ostensible* object,—private interest, the *real* one: and thus reviews are frequently made the vehicle of all that is illiberal and ungenerous, merely to gratify individual prejudice. Who can forget the fate of Kirke White and Keats? or that cold blooded personality which distinguishes the strictures of the northern critic, and which occasioned the death of one of his victims? Can that be called criticism, which indulges in individual invective, which separates an author from his works, to ridicule his profession, the length of his nose, or the form of his countenance?—

“I will unmask the hypocrites,—lay bare

The front of guilt, that men may see and shun it.”

yes; such are writers for hire. Men, who will write you up or write you down, just as their employer bids them; who are congelated into a state of sordid apathy and obtuseness of feeling, because they must write, to live; and having no vulnerable point themselves, scatter the arrows of malignity with impunity.

But I can furnish a stronger proof of the partiality of reviews. I have seen the identical manuscript of an author's criticism of his own work, which criticism, for private and *weighty* reasons, was duly inserted. This is almost as bad as the critique which one Heron, who, about sixteen years ago, was editor of the British Neptune, wrote upon a performance at Drury Lane theatre. I think it was the *Road to Ruin*; I am not certain, but it matters not. However, the fact was, that Mister Heron wrote his critique, without seeing the play; and it happened, most unfortunately, that owing to the indisposition of a principal performer, *the piece was changed in*

the house. The critique appeared; great was the outcry of the manager and the public, great the merriment of his brother editors; and the fracas ended in the discharge of Mr. H. from his editorial office.

But to enable the reader to decide for himself, on the partiality of reviews, I will ask him one or two questions, on the answers to which I will allow the justice of my argument to depend. Did he ever know a work condemned, that was printed for the publisher of the review in which the critique appeared; or for any of those booksellers with whom he is generally associated; that is, whose names, with his own, appear at the foot of the titles of works which he has published? Did he ever know a review, holding one side of a political opinion, uniformly criticise with impartiality the productions of authors, (though devoted to purely literary subjects) who are on the opposite side? I will admit, that in the case of Lord Byron, whose literary excellence places him above criticism, such apparent impartiality may exist; and for this reason, that the critic's condemnation would be laughed at, and his judgment despised; so that, after all, such eulogy is pure selfishness. But let me refer the reader to two articles, which were reviewed a short time ago in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. The one was "*Fables from La Fontaine*," (rendered prettily enough I own, but not forgetting that it is rather a paraphrase than a translation);—the other a translation of Catullus by Lamb, who was candidate for the representation of Westminster. Mark the liberality of the critic:—the "*Fables*" being published anonymously, he professed, of course, not to know the author; and after heaping on him a superfluity of eulogy, concluded by hoping "a second edition would soon enable this *nameless man* to step boldly forward;" for that "he might fairly claim for himself that wreath, which he is so well entitled to wear from the tree of *Apollo*!!!" Now observe the contrast: Lamb's Catullus was every thing that was wretched; neither faithful to the original nor elegant in the translation; it was mangled piecemeal, accompanied with some political, "lack-lustre" witticisms, as remote from the subject under discussion as the two Poles. But the mystery is clear. The author of the translation of the "*Fables*," it has since appeared, is a person high in office. Master North, with all his pretended ignorance, knew this well enough; and he did not dare to condemn them. Mr Lamb, on the other hand..... but the conclusions are sufficiently obvious.

I will furnish the reader with one more test of *critical* sincerity.

In order to ascertain the genuineness of a reviewer's opinion, let him look among the advertisements in the wrapper. If he sees a long list of works by the publisher of the review in question, he may depend upon it the critique is not sincere; for who would offend a good customer?

Goldsmith, with a jesuitical ingenuity unworthy of so good a man, endeavours to ridicule the idea of writing for amusement, or in other words, of composing without being incited by the hope of pecuniary emolument; and like all false reasoners, exposes the nakedness of his argument by its absurdity. He contends, that as we would sooner go to a shoemaker for a pair of shoes, or a tailor for a coat, than to one who had not undergone a previous initiation, so we must necessarily derive more delight from the perusal of the works of an author by profession; one who had made it his trade, and who, "as he lives to please, *must* please to live," than from the best productions of an amateur. Now to say nothing of its illiberality, this is evidently false reasoning; for the two cases are by no means parallel; no such comparison can be made between mental and mechanical labour. It may be very true, that the shoemaker and tailor, who have been regularly initiated in their respective handicrafts, would be more likely to furnish us with good articles than the self-taught artisan; but is literary composition so mechanical an operation, as to depend for its excellence on the simple circumstance of the writer being a labourer for hire? Is it a necessary consequence, that the man who has been a literary drudge all his life, should be the best author? I should think not; for, in the first place he has lost his independence of mind: the very circumstance of his writing for pay militates against the merit of his productions. He is restrained from writing freely by a number of causes which cannot operate on the man of independence; and his genius having been constantly under the influence of circumstances, is fettered; he has always had a particular interest to promote; and his writings must square with those opinions, it is to his pecuniary advantage to adopt. But the independent writer, on the other hand, has no such limitations. He writes without restriction, and surely, if we suppose him to possess the advantages of a liberal education and a studious mind, *he* is as likely to write with elegance and correctness, as the mere literary drudge. It may be urged, that the very circumstance of his being independent of profit would cause him to compose with carelessness or inattention. This by no means follows; but even

admitting that it did, it bears no comparison with that neutral, cautious, sort of feeling, which must be visible in the writings of a man, who is obliged to be upon his guard in every sentence, lest something should slip out which did not agree with the views of his patron the bookseller. Let me be correctly understood: I am alluding to those who write by agreement; the general class of Editors, authors at per sheet, and those who engage to compose or compile a volume, on any given subject, for a certain sum;* I do not so strictly include those, who, having written, dispose of their work to a bookseller; and, least of all, such authors as Lord Byron, and a few others, who being originally comparatively independent in circumstances, receive the profits of their literary labours rather as a matter of chance, than the consequences of a previous stipulation. An author would be very weak indeed, did he, from such a mistaken notion of independence, give away the profit of his works to a bookseller: were he as rich as Cræsus, there could be no reason for such misplaced liberality.

To return, however, to Goldsmith, it is a very clear, that in this case, he argued like most of us, who are glad to believe what we wish to be true. The fact is, that he himself was the very man, whose cause he was defending,—the writer for hire; and greatly as I admire him, both in his literary and personal character, I cannot suppress the fact, that he was employed in the very lowest walk of literature, the drudgery of selection and compilation; and, if our estimate of his genius depended on the merit of those works which he *undertook* (as the phrase is), it is certain that he would not have attained the high rank he now holds in English literature. Indeed it may be fairly questioned, whether, under such circumstances, it is possible that he could have produced those inimitable poems, *The Deserted Village* and *The Traveller*.

The conclusions which I have thus attempted to draw, are harsh, I confess; but I cannot help thinking them just; nor can I reconcile with that delicacy of feeling imbibed by literary pursuits the disposal of an author's talents as a species of merchandize. The trader in bags and bales (to speak technically) may haggle about

* It is said that the author of the *Stranger in Ireland*, &c. so successfully ridiculed by Dubois in "My Pocket Book," used to stipulate for the price of his work before he set out on his travels. If I am not mistaken, this was precisely the case with the "Northern Summer;" and, I believe, with some other of his productions.

price ; he may listen, with comparative indifference, and certainly with no very great degree of mental anguish, to the depreciation of his goods, and to unfavorable comparisons with those of another ; but no one will contend that a man can submit to a similar judgment passed upon the product of his brain, with as much indifference as if it were a bale of cloth or a bag of cotton. He is surely deserving if our *contempt*, if he can ; of our *pity*, if he cannot ; and the conclusion is complete, for there can be no alternative.

The Blighted Heart.

A FRAGMENT.

His face was as pale as a sculptur'd death ;
No statue was ever so cold :
You'd have thought the chill Tyrant had stolen his breath,
And his knell had already been toll'd :
But there gleam'd in his eyes a sepulchral fire ;
A wan and unearthly light,
And they gaz'd, when you gaz'd, with a stedfastness dire,
As the gazer's soul they'd blight.
Not a groan or a sigh on the deep calm broke,
But his brow in despair's still language spoke
Of griefs that on earth would never depart—
Of hopes long crush'd—and a *blighted heart* !

I saw him again 'ere his heart was cold,
When his soul was hastening home,
And a change I mark'd that flattering told
Of health and peace to come ;
'Twas the hectic of death that dyed his cheek,
And ting'd with a crimson glow,
As we see in the west a rosy streak,
That gleams on the winter-snow.
Brightly it sleeps as the ruby hue
Of summer-suns at the evening view,
But warmth to the snow it can never impart,
As sad and as cold as the *blighted heart* !

Yet his locks were dark, and the summers were few
Of his youth that for ever had flown,
And he deem'd not the flow'rs at his foot that grew,
Should soon on his bier be thrown.

His soul was true, and his heart was warm,

And his passions were warmer still,

'Ere reason frown'd on the fairy charm,

And the canker of grief could kill.

But his wounds are heal'd, and his soul's at rest,

Where sorrow ne'er comes, in the world of the blest ;

And heaven itself did a ray impart,

To cheer the last sigh of the *blighted heart!*

ALIQUIS.

The Reliquary.

No. 1.

"Men trample grass, and prize the flow'rs of May,
But grass is green when flow'rs do fade away."

FLETCHER'S ECLOGUES.

OUR Correspondents are really the cleverest people in existence. Not only do they oblige us with much that we should never otherwise have dreamt of, but by a peculiar felicity, pounce upon the very topics we are most anxious to illustrate ourselves ; it appears indeed to us, that did we but for a moment form an idea of writing libels on the state, some kind contributor, or as the man in the play says, "some d—d good natured friend or other," would anticipate us in a twinkling. But to the point. A wish to do something in the very way of the paper to which we have here given the title of the Reliquary, and attached so venerable a motto, haunted us most unspeakably ; the thing floated in embryo, and might yet have remained unorganized, when lo ! there came upon us the following very erudite epistle, embodying at once all our ideas upon the subject, and rendering tangible what had hitherto been so dubious and indistinct. We wished, in short, to pick up from time to time, certain ancient scraps, (either in prose or verse,) worthy of

rescue from the dark realms of forgetfulness; to pluck some of those quaint flowerets which have been rooting themselves at ease on Lethe's banks, any time these three or four centuries; and here does Mr. Adam Winterton come forward like a well-disposed person, to save us (for one month at least,) the labour both of research and annotation. We imagine our new correspondent to be a very oracular, sage, pains-taking kind of old gentleman, "full of wise saws and *ancient* instances," but at the same time must acknowledge our inability to comprehend in its full force the justice of his complaint, that the works of our ancestors are treated with reprehensible neglect, or, to use his own christian-like language, "with pitiless disregard." We, in the simplicity of our understanding, conceived the rage for antique productions to be prevalent enough in all conscience; but the veneration of some people is really excessive, and induces such an insatiable craving for relics of the olden time, that we are well aware, the devotion of our entire work to such things, would, in their estimation, be a very trifling and inadequate sacrifice. Nevertheless, Ladies and Gentlemen, permit us the honour of introducing you to Mr. Adam Winterton, whose communication runs as follows:

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*To the Editor of the Literary Speculum.*

—

"I love every thing that's old; old books,  
Old wine and old friends."

*She Stoops to Conquer.*

Inasmuch, most worthy Sir, as it hath not appeared unto thee either derogatory from the dignity of thy work, or inconsistent with the judgment and good taste elsewhere manifested in thy endeavours towards the edification and amusement of thy readers, to present unto them certain matter, *besprent*, as it were, with the dust of antiquity; and seeing moreover that amongst the number of those into whose hands thy work may fall, some few may be found, who, with our worthy friend above quoted, are not ashamed, even in these days of squeamish refinement, to acknowledge a feeling of regret for the olden time, and afford to compositions of

worth and excellence, that commendation which they may justly challenge, albeit somewhat obscured in the lapse of years, by the change of manners, habits, and circumstances; I say, that seeing these things, I am induced to lay before you the following poem, one from amongst the very few which have escaped being cut down with the sickle and consumed.

And here, most worthy Sir, I cannot but notice the pitiless disregard, into which, of late years, many of the productions of our British ancestors have fallen, although, sooth to say, I better may forget that, (seeing the many noble productions which of late have appeared amongst us,) than excuse the invidious and irreverent preference given to works, whose only passport to our shelves consists in their having originated in Greece or Italy. Nay, not only do we find these things cried up by the world, but even the very names of men whose productions we never saw, and consequently of whose worth we know not any proof, are, to our shame be it said, cited as instances of incomparable genius, whilst the lucubrations of our venerable forefathers sleep in shameless oblivion, to the scandal of their unworthy posterity.

That in the productions of the good old bards, much is to be found not clearly comprehensible, by reason of those changes I have already alluded to, cannot be denied; neither may we hide that in the present improved state of our language, the eye of the critic shall peradventure receive great offence from divers things rugged and uncouth. Nevertheless, in our readiness to admit these objections against a more general perusal of our progenitors, we should not omit to mention at the same time, the many disadvantages under which they wrote. Civilization had, until the fourteenth century, made but little progress either in Britain, or its sister kingdom, Scotland; and literature, its consequent attendant, was upon as slight a footing. The continual broils in which they were engaged during the reigns of Henries 5th, 6th, and 7th, left little leisure for the cultivation of either one or the other. For although, my good Sir, such a state of things might much tend to sharpen the intellect in considerations of personal safety, nevertheless it still as much unfitted it for occupations of a gentler nature.

But peradventure the more efficient reason why learning had not made greater advances in either of the two kingdoms, will be found in that barbarous policy, which induced those in power to repress



all endeavours in their dependents, towards emancipation from the dark state of ignorance in which they were bound.

It will scarcely, I opine, be disputed, that if a desire of *fame* in the present day, induceth a man to step before the world as an author, there are also certain little emoluments which incline him to continue in the same character. The case was however widely different during the periods to which I allude, inasmuch as neither honour nor rewards were the attendants of genius and ability, but as is well known, the little estimation in which learning was held, rather brought upon its possessors, not only neglect, but contempt and derision; and the best scholars in the kingdom, furnished with credentials and recommendations to the notice of the charitable by the chancellors of the Universities, were constrained to wander as mendicants from door to door.\*

Under such powerful depressions we are rather left to marvel at the advance which was made, than complain of their backwardness; nor do I hesitate to declare my firm conviction, that under due consideration of the things I have stated unto you, as on the one hand we may find many things to blame, so on the other we shall meet with much more meriting our praise and admiration.

Having deemed these desultory observations somewhat necessary, I now proceed to our Poem.

Such of thy readers as are not unacquainted with that period of Scottish History, during the reign of *James 3rd*, will remember that negociations had been carried on between that country and England, for the purpose of uniting in marriage the widow of *Edward 4th* to *James*; and her two remaining daughters, the one to the *Marquis of Ormond*, a Scotchman, and the other to *James, Duke of Rothsay*, eldest son to *James 3rd*. The troubles, however, in which the folly of the Scots Monarch had involved his kingdom, prevented the nuptials from being solemnised. Upon the demise of *James 3rd*, and succession of his son, that monarch, who had been induced to aid the pretensions of *Perkin Warbeck* to the English

\* As an illustration of what is here advanced I beg to subjoin the following anecdote:—Two learned persons travelling together, came, at length, to the gate of a certain castle. The lord thereof, learning from their credentials that they were each endowed with the gift of poesy, directed his servants to bring them unto a well; where, inserting the persons of these learned men, each in a bucket, they were alternately lowered therein, nor suffered to depart therefrom until (to the great delight of the baron and his company) each had composed a complet of verses upon the bucket in which he was placed.—A. W.

throne, finding the cause he had espoused no way supported by the English, was fain at length to make his peace with our 7th Harry, whose interest no less it was to keep the turbulent spirit of the Scots at rest, a desideratum which he effected by the union of his eldest daughter, Margaret, then fifteen years old, with James. The marriage was consummated in 1503, to the infinite satisfaction of both nations.

Upon this occasion was written the Poem I herewith present thee, and trusting thou wilt receive no less pleasure from its perusal than I have done ;

I remain, thine to command,

ADAM WINTERTON.

### THE THISTLE AND THE ROSE.

An ancient Scots Poem, written nearly 400 Years ago.

Quhen Merch with variand winds was overpast  
And sweit Apryle had with his silver showsrs  
Tane leif of nature with an orient blast,  
And lusty May that mudder <sup>2</sup> is of flowr's,  
Had maid the birdes begin be tymous hours,  
Among the tendir odvors <sup>3</sup> reid and quhyt ;  
<sup>4</sup> Quhois harmony to hear was grit delyt.

In bed at morrow sleiping as I lay,  
Methocht Auroro with her rubie ene  
In at my window lukit by the day, <sup>5</sup>  
And <sup>6</sup> halsit me with visage pale and grene, <sup>7</sup>  
Upon her hand a lark sang frae the splene,  
Luvors, awake out of your slumbering,  
Se how the lusty morning dois upspring.

Methocht fresh May before my bed upstood,

In weid depainted of ilk diverse hew,  
Sober—benyng and full of mensuetude <sup>9</sup>

In bright atyre of flowres all forgit new, <sup>10</sup>

Of heavenly colours, quhyte, reid, browne and blew,

Balmit in dew, and gilt with Phebus' beims,

Quhyle all the house ilumynt with her leims.

Slugart ! scho <sup>12</sup> said, awake anon, <sup>13</sup> for schame,  
 And in my honour san thing thou gae wryte,  
 The lark has done the merry day proclaim,  
 Lovers to raise with comfort and delyte;  
 Will nocht increase thy courage to indyte,  
 Quhois heart somtyme has glad and blissfull bene  
 Sangs aft to mak under the breanches grene ?

Quherto, quoth I, sall I upryse at morrow ?  
 For in thy month few birds haif I hard sing,  
 They haif mair cause to weep and plein <sup>14</sup> their sorrow,  
 Thy air it is not holsum nor benyng, <sup>15</sup>  
 Lord Eolus dois in thy season ring,  
 Sae bousteous ar the blasts of his shrill <sup>16</sup> horn,  
 Amang thy bews <sup>17</sup> to walk I haif forborne.

With that the lady soberly did smyle,  
 And said upryse and doe thy observance : <sup>18</sup>  
 Thou did promist in Mayis lusty quhyle  
 Then to discrye the Rose of most plesance.  
 Go see the birdis how they sing and dance,  
 And how the skyes iluminat ar bricht,  
 Enamylt richly with new azure licht.

Quhen this was said, away then went the quene,  
 And entert in a lusty garden gent ;  
 And then methoct, full hastylie besene,  
 In sark and mantle after her I went,  
 Into this garth <sup>19</sup> most dulce and redolent  
 Of herb and flow'r and tendir plants most sweet,  
 And grene leivs doing of dew doun fleit. <sup>20</sup>

The <sup>21</sup> pourpour sun with tendir rayis reid,  
 In orient bricht as angel did appeir,  
 Throw golden skys advancing up his heid,  
 Quhois gildit tresses schone sae wondir cleir,  
 That all the world tuke comfort far and near,  
 To luke upon his fresh and blissful face,  
 Doing all sable frae the heavenis chace.



And as the blissful sun drave up the sky,  
 All nature sang throu comfort of the licht;  
 The minstrills wing'd with open voyces cry,  
 Come welcome day that comforts every wicht!  
 Hail May! hail Flora! hail Auroro shene,  
 Hail Princess Nature! hail Luv's handsome quene!

Dame Nature gave an inhibition ther  
 To Neptune ferss<sup>22</sup> and Eolus the bauld,  
 Not to perturb the water nor the air,  
 That nowther<sup>23</sup> blashy show'r nor blasts mair cauld,  
 Suld flowirs effray<sup>24</sup> nor fowles upon the fauld.

Scho bad eik Juno Goddes of the sky  
 That scho the heavens suld keep amene<sup>25</sup> and dry.

Als scho ordain'd that every bird and beist  
 Before her Hieness suld annon compeir,  
 And every flowir of virtue maist and leist,  
 And every herb in fair field far and neir,  
 As they had wont in May frae yeir to yeir;  
 To hir thair quene to mak obediens, <sup>26</sup>  
 Full low inclynand with dew reverens.

With that annone scho sent the swifte-fute roe  
 To bring in al kind beist frae dale and down,  
 The restless swallow ordert scho to go,  
 And fetch all fowl of small and grit renowne,  
 And to gar flowirs appeir of all fassoun. <sup>27</sup>  
 Fully craftely conjurit she the yarrow.  
 Quhilk<sup>28</sup> did forth swirk as swifte as ouy arrow.

[To be concluded in our next.]

- |                                                                                                     |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Taken leave.                                                                                     | 2. Mother.                  |
| 3. Used here by poetical license for blossoms.                                                      | 4. Whose.                   |
| 5. Look'd in at my window by day or dawning.                                                        |                             |
| 6. Hail'd or saluted,                                                                               |                             |
| 7. Green; used here in the sense of young or fresh. As in Byron,<br>"My heart is not much greener." |                             |
| 8. Benign.                                                                                          | 9. Mildness or good-humour. |
| 10. Fresh blowing.                                                                                  | 11. Embalm'd.               |
| 12. She.                                                                                            | 13. Presently.              |
| 14. Murmur.                                                                                         | 15. Benign.                 |
| 16 Thrill.                                                                                          | 17. Boughs.                 |

18. "Perform thy duty or respects: here 'tis proper we take notice of the cadency of such words: many in that age being pronounced long that now are expressed short. But our union with France and French auxiliaries so often in Scotland at that time, can easily account for that manner of pronunciation."—Note of an old editor.

This expression seems a favourite of the old poets, "To do observance to the lustye Maye."—Chaucer.

19. Garden.

20. Scattering dew drops fast.

21. Purple.

22. Fierce.

23. Neither.

24. Attack, molest.

25. Gentle, clear.

26. Obediens and reverens, as observed before in the words observence and plesance: must be accented long.—Note by an old editor.

27. Fashion, kind.

28. Which.

### Dove-Tailing.

"Poets are *born*, not *made*," a wise man says,  
And nature's poets only win the bays :  
I wonder then that Horace should indite  
Such learned rules to teach them how to write,  
If nature's gifts of merit were the test,  
Poets would prove mere copyists at best ;  
A sort of short-hand writers to the dame :  
She prompts a poem ; they transcribe the same ;  
Perfect of course ; for nature can't be wrong ;  
Sans blot or blemish, be it e'er so long.  
Now *I* conceive, and so I think will you,  
These *off-hand* writers must be monstrous few.  
No easy matter, faith ! to write a clear,  
Smooth page, and no corrections to appear ;  
Or if it is, *my* Pegasean hack,  
I must confess, has not yet got the knack.  
Therefore, to prove, in writing poetry,  
That nature had no hand at all in me,  
I'll shew *my* way ; mechanical I own,  
But not like builders, laying stone on stone,  
Just in the order they are meant to stand ;—  
When to rhyme-stringing *I* apply my hand,  
I have the strangest plan you ever knew,  
(I can't suppose 'tis just the case with you);

For when, by dint of noddle sore perplex,  
 I've squeez'd a line out, I don't write the next,  
 But lay it by, and conjure up another,  
 (Expecting in due time to find its brother.)  
 Thus I go on, not waiting for a rhyme,  
 ('Till all's complete, I deem that waste of time)  
 And then observe, as a fresh rhyme I hit it,  
 I pare it down and wedge it in and fit it.  
 A true Hibernian plan perhaps you'll say,  
 But never mind, Sir, it is still my way;  
 And clever, too, I think, and so will you.  
 Just try it now, and see how it'll do.  
 Don't mark it for the nostrum of a fool.  
 There's much worse *gumption* in the cockney school.  
 You smile—I guess—to you it seems a failing,  
 Not writing poetry—but mere *dore-talling*.

Nov. 7, 1821.

L. C.

From a "CONSTANT CORRESPONDENT" of Blackwood's Magazine.

To the Editor of the *Literary Speculum*.

**SPEC. MY BOY!**

When we are a little better acquainted you'll forbear to wonder at the frank and easy style in which I address you. In the mean time let me introduce myself in the unrestrained, straight-forward kind of manner peculiar to me, by saying at once that I think your first number d—d bad, any assertion you may make to the contrary is decidedly *a lie*; but let us discuss the matter in a gentlemanly way. In the first place, how you could expect to establish a successful periodical work without some assistance from me, without some indication of an intimacy between us, is most inexplicable. The consequences, however, are obvious; your miscellany being no more adapted to the peppery taste of the age, than a "tame rabbit boiled to rags without salt or sauce," to the palate of an epicure in its last stage of exhaustion and satiety. You manifest in almost every page a decided attachment to certain decaying prejudices, a fondness for certain vulgar and squeamish predilections in favour of what are termed the courtesies of life, a



kind of trembling deference to the delicacy and feelings of others, so truly incompatible both with the spirit of the time and your own interest, that, for my own part, I really know not whether to consider you in the light of a madman or a fool. But to proceed. You have thought proper, Mr Spec. to be extremely smart upon the style and tendencies of Blackwood's Magazine. Permit me, Sir, to inform you, that for a considerable period I have been a constant and liberal contributor to the pages of that spirited work, as you may readily convince yourself by a reference to the chief articles in almost every number, which, notwithstanding their variety of signatures, the merest glimmering of common sense will enable you to discern, have emanated from the same source. The proprietors, in fact, aware of their deep and lasting obligations to me, endeavour in some degree to acknowledge them by an unremitting regard and attention to my communications and suggestions, manifested indeed so strongly, that, to use a bold expression, their whole work is full of me. Under such influence, Sir, it is not to be wondered that their *manly* and *independent* pages betray none of that childish vacillation between the wish to amuse, and the inclination to be what you call *delicate*, so obvious in a few pragmatistical and methodistic productions still tolerated in these days of refinement, and among the number of which I must necessarily rank the Literary Speculum. In works of this spotless, milk and water class, a gentleman shall read himself eye-sore without encountering one smart satirical sally upon the personal or domestic peculiarities of any individual; without one refreshing jest on the poverty or wretchedness of any living creature; without, in short, being enabled, (like the readers of Blackwood,) to laugh heartily and frequently at the reflection, that some *delicate* scribbler or other dies piecemeal every month, of spleen and vexation, (or, as you would term it, brokenness of heart,) by perusing a succession of strictures in which he is pleasantly ridiculed for the delight and amusement of others.

In conclusion, Spec. let me advise you, if you would avoid being read with the most yawning listlessness, and thrown aside with the most contemptuous petulance, imitate as far as you may, the great master-work of the North; shew the same lively derision of all that is or ought to be obsolete, as—social ties, and moral restrictions, tenderness for the feelings of individuals, and limits to your applause of yourself. Discard these trammels, conciliate my

esteem by a reverential regard to every thing I may suggest, and depend upon it your miscellany will soon have the ubiquity of *Mungo* Sempie himself. This letter, I am well aware, will be the only tolerable thing in your present number, (for dull as you are, I cannot doubt your readiness to insert it;) but, in the name of all that is reasonable, let your third evince in some degree that my strictures have not been in vain; get rid of your detestable *mauvaise honte*, and give the world to understand how much it is indebted to one who will then be most happy to subscribe himself your constant reader and contributor,

IMPUDENCE.

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### The Wreath.

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Weep not that thro' the path he trac'd,  
No flow'ret bloom'd to bless his way;  
That life to him a thorny waste,  
Was all uncheer'd by pleasure's ray.

Tho' warm in heart, and pure in worth,  
At fortune's sport he still was driven,  
Believe the wreath he miss'd on earth,  
Now blooms upon his brow in heaven.

Then cease to trace the scenes of woe,  
That wrung the heart we mourn and love,  
But think that every thorn below,  
Has long since turn'd to flowers above.

That even while we wept the waste,  
To which his spotless hours were given,  
His Maker mark'd the path he trac'd,  
And angels wove the wreath in heaven.

M. LEMAN REDE.

## Apparitions.

"Ghosts, a favourite theme

With those who love to reason or to dream."

To argue against a belief in apparitions, may appear, in this enlightened age, as superfluous a task, as a dissertation to prove that fire is hot, ice cold, or any other inveterate truism, too self-evident to be disputed; yet, however ridiculed, and apparently exploded, this species of superstition may be, it is certain that many, and those of no ordinary intellect, admit the possibility, and even the probability of their existence.

It is well known, that the great Dr. Johnson, whose strength of mind might have been supposed proof against such imbecillity, was not only weak enough to imbibe this vulgar prejudice, but (if my memory does not deceive me) gave credence to the northern superstition of second sight; and I must confess that it has happened to myself, to meet with men of sound understandings, who have very ingeniously defended this hypothesis; evincing the possibility, by the mere power of eloquence, of investing falsehood with so much of the semblance of truth as to be mistaken for the reality,

As it is therefore evident, that superstition is not confined to the vulgar, but that men of sense and education have been occasionally imbued with it, it may be worth while to inquire into the grounds of this belief, and submitting it to the test of reason, ascertain how far (if at all) it is really deserving of acceptance. As a vulgar opinion, it would scarcely merit inquiry; and if it merely obtained with the million, that circumstance alone would perhaps be sufficient to invalidate it; thus, the consideration of the question derives its sole importance from the credence of enlightened minds, the influence of whose opinion being very powerful and extensive, I first propose to offer a few observations on that unlimited "pinning one's faith on another man's sleeve," which relies on his judgment on all occasions, because his general reasoning is correct.

It by no means follows, that because Dr. Johnson, or any other man of sound understanding, was convinced of the existence of



ghosts and apparitions, such conviction should be necessarily just. This is so palpable, that the bare mention of it might appear superfluous, and the reader would probably imagine that I was taking great pains to prove what was already admitted, were it not certain, that the majority of mankind are induced to take up opinions on no stronger ground; deeming it presumption to doubt what wiser men have believed. In philosophy, politics, and religion, as well as on minor subjects, this false reasoning obtains, to an extent that is scarcely suspected; ninety-nine persons out of a hundred believing through a secondary medium; and except in the mere ordinary concerns of life, few having the courage to judge for themselves. In matters of faith, most men are cowards. Although endowed with reason to distinguish truth from error, they are afraid to employ that reason where it would render them the most assistance; and like the peasantry of old days, who imputed the massy fragments of Roman architecture to the toil of demons, they would rather attribute what they cannot comprehend to a supernatural cause, than bring it to the plain and simple test of common sense.

Such persons would clothe their arguments in language similar to this: "When we find men like Dr. Johnson affirming or admitting their belief in such existences, we must feel well assured, from his acknowledged soundness of intellect, and the proofs of stupendous energy of mind apparent in his writings, that he had strong and sufficient reasons for this belief, which it would be vain to cavil with or dispute. We must not presume to place our opinions in opposition to *his*. His judgment on all occasions was sound, his intellect clear, his reasoning irresistible; and therefore his conclusions are more likely to be correct than ours."

This is a very general mode of arguing; and I appeal to the reader, whether he has not sometimes solved a knotty point in a similar manner. To a reverence for great names we sacrifice our judgment; we fear to doubt; we dare not examine into the truth; and thus, between prejudice, disinclination to research, and a regard for the opinions of others, there are few who have the courage to think and decide for themselves.

"Men grow pale,  
Lest their own judgment should become too bright,  
And their free thoughts be crimes."

Instead, therefore, of believing by proxy, and admitting as a necessary consequence, that because sensible men have imbibed

certain notions, such notions must be just; should we not rather conclude, that as our nature is prone to error, the wisest are not exempt from a participation in the ordinary frailties of humanity? Ought we not to consider the credulity of such men as giving the subject an additional importance, and instead of suppressing inquiry, deem it more than ordinarily incumbent on us to scrutinize the grounds of their belief? Under this impression, I next propose to investigate the probable reasons which influence this opinion; and submit them to the test of rational argument.

Among the most plausible reasons for a belief in apparitions, the mystery of our existence is most likely to obtain in a contemplative mind. Man knows not "whence he cometh, nor whither he goeth;" his very being is an enigma, which reason in vain attempts to solve. He is here; but how he came here he knows not. He is the instrument of an unseen Being; and his coming into the world, and is going out of it, are matters of necessity, in which his own will has no part. The labour of his own hands survives him; the created outlasts the creator; the possessor of extensive domains and countless riches, by the mere fall of a stone, or the slip of his foot, is reduced to a clod of the valley. Are not these awful mysteries; sufficient to beget a train of thought, ending in conclusions, dark, awful, and superstitions; and more likely to be engendered in a reflecting mind, than to impress the million, whose obtuseness of intellect, while it shuts them out from reflection, secures them from that painful intensity of thought, that keenness of mental sensation, which often end in the loss of reason and of life? I conceive that such men, from the conviction, that all around them is wrapped in mystery, and the train of reflections it is likely to induce, would yield assent to superstitious notions more readily than the ordinary reasoner, whose ideas are not excursive enough to stray beyond a certain point; and who, from the mere inability to proceed, stops short, before he is lost in the maze of metaphysical disquisition. It is this *deficiency of dullness*, which misleads the ruminating man; he is prevented from exerting his reason, to solve some doubts, because he cannot satisfactorily account for all; and becomes the victim of superstition, because he prescribes no limits to his imagination.

Another cause may be traced to the effect of early impressions. The infant mind, before it is strong enough to reason, is imbued with supernatural terrors, distilled into it, generally, by the



ignorance of those who have the superintendence of our childhood. There are few of us who cannot remember the effect some goblin legend of the nursery has taken on our juvenile imagination. We received it at the time with unhesitating credulity; and though we have long since laughed at the folly of such belief, the impression remains, and will remain, maugre every effort of reason and common sense. We reject as ridiculous a credence in the story itself; but it has communicated that tinge of superstition to our ideas, which cannot be eradicated; it was the first shock which our nerves sustained, and its effects can never be healed. The dread inspired by darkness may be traced to the same source. In itself it is no more terrible than light;\* but the threat in our infancy, of being shut in a dark hole, with all those culpable methods of reducing children to obedience, employed by ignorance, has begot an association of terror, which good sense and reason can never afterwards effectually destroy.

A third cause may be attributed to a natural love of the marvellous, a sort of ultra credulity.

We hear stories of apparitions, apparently well attested, and yield them our assent, partly from a respect to the credibility of the narrator, and partly from a reverence for what is wonderful. Man is made up of contradictions; and it is by no means uncommon to observe a disposition to believe improbabilities, and dispute plain truths, in the same person,

The fourth and final cause is an idea that our belief in such appalling visitations is not merely countenanced, but positively demanded, by the authority of Holy Writ. This, from the solemn shape it assumes exerts a more extensive influence than either of the former, and requires, therefore, a more earnest and particular investigation.

I have thus enumerated the reasons likely to produce a belief in the existence of apparitions; viz. A reflection on the mystery of our existence; the effect of early impressions; a natural love of the marvellous; and an idea that such belief is countenanced by Scripture. Very few words will dispose of the whole. The first is evidently a morbid association of ideas, and the natural result of an

\* A friend, with whom I have discussed this point, contends that "darkness, in its strict acceptation, has an almost universal power of instilling awe, though it may not awaken any defined or embodied ideas of fear;" and that to admit the proposition I have assumed, "we must imagine a total absence of all our associations, antipathies, and affections; in which case, the same inertness of faculty that rendered darkness as little appalling as light, would make a dungeon as cheerful as a palace."



attempt to exceed the bounds to which we are limited by the laws of our being; the second and third are positive weaknesses, which it would be superfluous to dilate upon; and the last alone, as I have already intimated, is sufficiently important to deserve inquiry. It will be enough for our present purpose, if I select two of the most prominent points, which are construed to have this tendency; one is the apparition of Samuel before Saul and the witch of Endor; the other, the re-appearance of our Saviour to his disciples.

With respect to the first, it does not very obviously appear from the text, that the ghost of Samuel was visible to Saul. All his knowledge appears derived from the woman. He asks her, "what form is he of?" She replies: "An old man cometh up, covered with a mantle;" the most obvious answer she could give, and which any one could have given without the assistance of magic. And indeed, does it not seem inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, to imagine that he would suffer the Prophet to appear to one who had so utterly lost his favour, or answer questions extorted by devilish means? since it is acknowledged that necromantic power was derived from the Author of Evil; and, therefore, could not possibly exert an influence over the spirits of the just.

With respect to the re-appearance of our Saviour, it is by no means an argument for the belief I am endeavouring to combat. His miracles, his resurrection from the dead, and the violations of the ordinary rules of nature, which marked his visit upon earth, were the necessary accompaniments of an event so awfully important to mankind. The mission of such a being might well be attended by circumstances of no ordinary character. But are we thence to conclude, that the Deity would work similar wonders to effect the silly purposes for which spectres are said to make their appearance?

Independent however of every other circumstance, the main point of the question rests on its utility. Why is the regular order of the universe disturbed? It must surely be for some purpose that cannot be effected by natural means; and is not this calling in question the power of the Supreme, by implying his inability to compass his ends without a violation of the ordinary course of nature? But admitting it to be the case, let the advocates of this hypothesis point out an instance wherein supernatural agency must be exclusively employed, from the inadequacy of human intervention to accomplish the end required. The discovery of a murder, and the warning of a sinner appear, to me as alone possessing adequate im-

portance for such a mission. The developement of an atrocious deed, to whose perpetration none were witnesses—a transgression of the Creator's first law,—and the “turning of the wicked from the error of their ways,” can alone be considered as sufficient reasons. The absurd tales of spirits revisiting the world to right a lawful heir, or point out buried treasure, are unworthy of notice.

With respect then to the first, what insuperable difficulties present themselves ! For is it not evident, that if one murder can be detected by natural means, all may ? Were it indeed peculiar to the crime to defy human sagacity, something might be said ; but this is not the case. Murders, which appeared to baffle all attempts at discovery, having no witnesses, and over which the lapse of years had thrown an apparently impenetrable veil, have been revealed in the most simple manner. If then the Almighty has ordained “foul deeds to rise,” by mere human intervention, in so many instances, surely there can be no just reason, why the detection, if decreed to take place at all, should not always happen by the same natural medium. But for some reason, which human penetration cannot elucidate, murder is not invariably detected ; and it therefore does not appear, that God considers it necessary that it should always be punished by human agency. There have been many, the perpetrators of which have never been discovered, and for the detection of whom, even the interference of a spectre would now be superfluous, since, from the length of time which has elapsed, it must be evident they have long since paid the debt of nature.

Neither does the probability of a spirit's appearance to warn a sinner, rest on a more solid foundation. The admirable author of the “Tales of the Hall,” has a few lines, which are extremely in point.

“Warning,” said Richard, “seems the only thing,  
That would a spirit on an errand bring ;  
To turn a guilty soul from wrong to right,  
A ghost might come,—at least I think it might.”  
“But,” said the brother, “if we here are tried,  
A spirit sent would put that law aside ;  
It gives to some advantage others need,  
Or hurts the sinner should it not succeed.”

CRABBE.

The spirit must either derive his power of revisiting the earth from the Deity or himself. If the former, what can be more strikingly unjust than extending this permission in some instances and not in others ? If the latter, ghosts would be as common in the world as the living ; since few would want a parent, a lover, or a friend,

to warn them of danger. Thus it is evident, that we must not only suppose the spirit to have the power of appearing, but the gift of foreknowledge, and an intimate acquaintance with the transaction of the world he has quitted.

As it is therefore obvious, that in the case of murder no just reason can be adduced for the visitation of spirits; since it appears incompatible with the power and dignity of the Creator, to pervert the order of nature in some instances, when he has effected his judgment by ordinary means in others; and since it is equally evident, that even for the warning of sinners, it is inconsistent with his providence, how contemptible are those stories which relate the appearance of a spectre to fulfil no errand, and answer no purpose. A house is haunted; an apparition is seen and heard; he stalks about and rattles his chains; and for what?—merely to terrify those who are unfortunate enough to see or hear him. Let any one imagine himself in the presence of a spectre; let him associate all those ideas of horror, which the bare thought of a communion with an unembodied spirit,—with one whom he knows to be dead, and suddenly sees again in the semblance of corporeality,—cannot fail to inspire, and say whether it is possible for human nature to sustain the shock. But admitting that there are those who can, and whose “firm nerves will never tremble,” the spectre must have a voice to relate the object of its mission, or where is the use of its appearing at all? How is it possible to conceive the existence of sound without matter, or that it can emanate from a being purely immaterial? How can “thin air” have a voice, and not only a voice, not only the capability of uttering sounds, but of conversing in the language of the party it addresses, and possessing all the faculties of discourse with which it was invested, when living?—For it is no satisfactory answer to say that we hear the wind, but cannot see it, since it is evident that we could *not* hear the wind but for opposing objects. It is the percussion of air against matter which causes sound, not the power of air alone. Again, can that which is not material, be impressed on our visual organs? The sun’s rays are visible, I admit, and so are shadows; but they are only so from the intervention of matter. Could we see a shadow, if no object stood between? Would the sun’s rays be visible, if there were no clouds, or if they shone *in vacuo*? Certainly not: we might as well pretend to see the wind. But the most ridiculous thing of all is the dress of the ghost. He or she is generally represented clothed in



white, or in a shroud ; and what can be more absurd than a spiritual being attired in a suit of clothes ? How can that which is impalpable be arrayed in linen, silk or worsted ; and having performed its errand,

“ Resolve to air, and mingle with the night ! ”

But maugre all this, it may be said, that we have well attested instances of supernatural visitations to persons deserving the highest credit. There is the story of Mrs. Veal, prefixed to Drelincourt on Death ; the ghost who appeared to Lord Lyttleton, the apparition of the navy bread contractor, who was seen hunted down Mount Etna or Mount Vesuvius (I forget which) by demons, and which was attested by a whole ship's crew, and entered on the log book ; with a number of others *ad infinitum*. Are not some deserving of credit ?—certainly not ; and for good and cogent reasons. The story of Mrs. Veal is a contemptible puff of the publisher of Drelincourt, to sell his book. The ghost strongly recommend that works to Mrs. Barville, and the whole is evidently a trumped-up tale to enhance its reputation. As to Lord Lyttleton, he was evidently the victim of a nervous irritability of system, and a morbid imagination ; his dying at the precise hour his fancy foretold, is no more remarkable than the instances on record of men who have anticipated a public execution by actual terror. I have somewhere read of a man, who was condemned to be beheaded within the walls of his prison. It happened, however, that a reprieve came ; but the gaoler, who was desirous of seeing the effects of mere terror, suppressed the pardon, and led him out to apparent execution. The culprit's eyes were bound, his head laid upon the block, and he was in momentary expectation of the axe severing it from his body ; instead of which a cup of cold water was thrown on his neck ; and such was the power of imagination, that terror supplied the place of reality, and the unfortunate being immediately expired. This is a parallel case to that of Lord Lyttleton. He firmly believed he should die at a certain hour, and his dissolution within the stated period was nothing more than a natural consequence of that belief. With respect to the navy contractor, I have never seen the narrative in print, but have heard it from various persons who related it with tolerable coincidence. I will briefly narrate it here, because it is possible that some of my readers may not have met with it. It appears then, that the widow of a navy contractor, brought an action against the captain of a vessel for having asserted, that on a certain

day, he had seen her deceased husband, dressed in clothes which it afterwards appeared he had on when he died, hunted by devils down one of the burning mountains. The lady, of course, did not relish this demoniac story, and she sought to recover damages for the injury sustained by her husband's posthumous fame. The trial came on; her case was stated, and the counsel for the defendant was called on for his defence. The whole ship's crew appeared in court, and positively swore that they were eye-witnesses of the fact. As a corroboration of their testimony, the log book was produced in court, by which it appeared that there was an entry of the circumstance exactly as they had stated it; whereupon the judge in summing-up observed, that although such things were not of ordinary belief, and one or two individuals might be mistaken, yet it was impossible that a whole ship's company should be deceived; he therefore directed the jury to find for the defendant, which they accordingly did; much to their shame, in my estimation of the matter; for by the same rule that Dr. Priestly asserted he would rather consider the Scriptures to be a forgery than believe the Almighty capable of injustice, so I would rather set down the captain and all his crew as wilfully or unconsciously perjured, than credit such a ridiculous story, which, if true, could answer no end whatever, except that of wounding the feelings of the widow, and terrifying those who were the spectators of her husband's punishment. But supposing them to imagine they had positively witnessed such a circumstance, is it not more likely that it was a mere visual illusion than an actual fact? The spectre of the Broken and the *fata morgana* are equally astonishing, and have an equal appearance of the miraculous; but philosophy has satisfactorily traced them to natural causes.—Supposing no wilful perjury in the case, this imaginary apparition can be satisfactorily accounted for on exactly similar principles. It was some optical illusion of nature; and it is natural enough for the sailors, who had been probably not over-honestly used by this contractor, to identify him as one of the parties, and their imagination easily supplied his infernal companions. On the whole, I do not hesitate at pronouncing the verdict to be a disgrace both to judge and jury, and a reflection on the common sense of the country at large.

I now come to the concluding point, which deserves particular consideration. Does any one remember meeting with a single instance, where the party who described the apparition had seen it



himself? I cannot say that the case ever occurred to me. It generally comes *at second-hand*; or if by chance we *do* hear the story from the actual spectator, we always find that he has never had the courage to accost it, or by close inspection satisfy himself that it was not a delusion. On the other hand, there are examples *ad infinitum* of apparent ghosts proving either to be substantial flesh and blood, or some inanimate object, which, although at a distance it possessed a supernatural appearance, when examined proved to be the stump of a tree, a reflection of the moon, or something equally trifling. The ghost which, a few years ago, terrified the inhabitants of Hammersmith, it will be recollected, proved a man, who to terrify his neighbours dressed himself in white flannel. His folly cost him his life; he was shot at and killed by one who was resolved to satisfy himself of his incorporeality, and who was found guilty of murder for this proof of his courage; though I believe he ultimately escaped hanging. Every one remembers too the result of the Cock Lane ghost, which attracted all the credulous fools in the metropolis, including grave divines and men of reputed judgment. In fact, all these apparitions, when fairly inquired into and courageously examined, have either proved to be tricks or illusions; and thus, from an impartial view of the subject, I am induced to conclude, that such things do not, neither can they exist, as they are inconsistent with the dignity, mercy and justice of the Creator.

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### The Editor's Coterie.

"We'll have some talk with these same learned Thebans."

KING LEAR.

ALAS! for the mutability of all things human! So say the philosophers, and so say we; for that which at one period was extremely simple and unimportant, to wit, the Editor's chit-chat with his contributors, or, in other words, "Notices to Correspondents," is now become a very serious kind of affair.

It was sufficient, in the "olden time" of magazines, to devote an unobtrusive corner of the wrapper to this purpose, where the



muse-struck Celias and Damons, and the prosing Philos and Philanders, had each their brief compliment or pithy rejection. Then came a prouder epoch, "a goodly fair page," being solely appropriated to the purpose; and lastly, in the present day, our editorial contemporaries intimate their lordly pleasure, in paragraphs of the most appalling *lengthiness* dignified with the most sounding and significant titles. We of course must follow the stream, and accordingly denominate this oracular and responsive part of our work, "The Editor's Coterie."

It was not without deep and earnest cogitation, we fixed upon this epithet; of which, however, our readers will readily acknowledge the propriety and significance. Here, then, we for the first time inform them, that the interests of the *Speculum* are promoted by an Association of Literary Friends, who have kindly pledged their assurances of support, and of whose ability to redeem this pledge a sufficient idea may be formed from the present and preceding number. To this combination of talent, we are indebted for a total independence of all anonymous assistance, the utter inadequacy of which to advance the reputation of a periodical work in the most trifling degree, few perhaps are aware of. Under less favourable circumstances, however, our individual belief would have been fatally confirmed; for of the multifarious communications forwarded to us, scarcely one has proved worthy of insertion. Like the bard of Twickenham, we read

"With honest anguish, and an aching head,"

and rise, with the most heartfelt thankfulness, that to peruse such effusions is the whole extent of our task.

We shall now be justified in glancing at such of the *Coterie* as have already testified their friendly interest in the welfare of the *Literary Speculum*.

In the common spirit of gallantry, we cannot avoid giving priority of mention to Miss M. Leman Rede, whose beautiful stanzas require no eulogy.

H., that happy initial, which seems to be productive of excellence ever since his lordship of Byron made it the subject of an enigma, has obvious claims on our gratitude and the admiration of our readers. We have reason to hope that his visits to our pages will not be like those of angels, "few and far between."

Adam Winterton, "kind old Adam Winterton," will not forget us over his canary; and many a lover of antique song doubtless wishes to chat away an hour with him.

\* is as dear in our regard as ourselves, and we are assured he will never desert us.

With J. G. G., though last not least in our dear love, we have contracted a debt which we shall scarcely ever be able to repay.

We request the public to believe that we are no proud Jacks, like Falstaff, but grateful for their patronage, and most ambitious to merit it. Our claim to a befitting portion of humility, we will immediately evince, by acknowledging that the "Memorabilia" of our last number occupied a greater space than in strict propriety it should have done. This was the result of circumstances now unnecessary to detail, and over which, unfortunately, we had no availing controul; but the exertions of the *Coterie* have enabled us to make ample compensation in our present number, of which, as our readers will observe, every article is original, and written exclusively for our pages.

The *Coterie* are liberal in their suggestions and remarks, and, from time to time, we shall in this place glance at the most important. Nothing immediately occurs to us, excepting a calculation by which it appeared that a page of ours almost equals in quantity one of the *New Monthly Magazine*; but without regard to this, it shall be our study to merit applause by the excellence of our matter and not by the space it fills. It was observed too that the likeness of Sir Walter Scott, in our present number, is superior to that of Lord Byron in our last; and we here pledge our assurances that the illustrative department of the *Speculum* shall invariably possess the same claims to public commendation.

A concluding word to the *Literati*. However confidently we assert our exemption from any reliance on anonymous support, we by no means wish to foster a spirit of exclusive aristocracy, but will be happy to admit contributions, from whatever source, whose merits can justly challenge the distinction. This, we regret to say, is not the case with the authors of "*La Pastorale*"—"Reflections,"—"Remarkable Circumstance,"—or Thebus on the fine Arts.

The latter we thank for his good intentions; but his communication would be considered by our readers rather as an advertisement than a critique, and his praise of the interment of Buonaparte in the *Cosmorama* is so far injudicious, as it applies to the very worst feature of that exhibition.







THOMAS CAMPBELL, ESQ.<sup>R</sup>

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